DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 153 230 CS 204 064

TITLE	Papers on Language.
INSTITUTION	Centre for Information on the Teaching of English, Edinburgh (Scotland).
PUB DATE	77
NOTE	37p.
JOURNAL CIT	Teaching English; v10 n2 p3-36 Apr 1977
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.83 HC-$2.06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Assignments; Comparative Education; Elementary Secondary Education; *English Curriculum; *English Instruction; *Foreign Countries; Graduate Study; Heterogeneous Grouping; Higher Education; *Language; *Language Arts; Language Development; School Policy; Slow Learners; *Teaching Techniques
IDENTIFIERS	*Scotland

ABSTRACT

The articles in this publication deal with English language study and other aspects of the English curriculum. Topics include the role of English in the secondary curriculum, a whole school language policy, information on language and language acquisition published in the past ten years that should be incorporated into language study courses, an experimental postgraduate course on the nature of language and language functions, English for slow learners, and methods for teaching English to classes of mixed ability students in secondary schools. Sample worksheets and examination questions for mixed ability classes are included. (GW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED153230

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Teaching English

The Journal of Teachers of English in Scotland

Vol. 10 No. 2 | A C.I.T.E. Publication | Spring 1977

ISSN 0305-7755

PAPERS ON LANGUAGE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Center for Information on the Teaching of Eng.
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

CS204006

240p

CENTRE FOR INFORMATION ON THE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

Moray House College of Education
Holyrood Road, Edinburgh EH8 8AQ

Telephone 031-556 8455 Ext 225

CITE was established in September 1967 with the support of the Scottish Education Department.

CITE acts as the focal point for curriculum development and support in English teaching in Scotland.

It is in touch with local development groups throughout Scotland.

It is the executive arm of the Scottish Central Committee on English.

It gathers information on the teaching of English as a mother tongue from a wide range of sources.

CITE has a large library of books (including textbooks) of concern to teachers of English.

The library is open from 0845 hours to 1645 hours daily.

Special arrangements can be made for opening at other times.

Books may be borrowed by post.

CITE publishes *Teaching English* thrice yearly in October, January and May.

The Editor welcomes suggestions for features and comment on the magazine's content.

He invites articles, reviews, original poetry for possible publication.

Copy for the next issue should be submitted by 21st March 1977.

SYDNEY B. SMYTH, M.A.
Director

TEACHING ENGLISH

Vol. 10 No. 2

S.C.C.E.
The Role of English in the Curriculum at SIII and SIV . . . 5
PATRICK J. MCLAUGHLIN
A Whole School Language Policy . 10
GEOFFREY THORNTON
The Last Ten Years . . . 16
MARY KARUS *and* SISTER VALERIO
Language Across the Curriculum . 20
BRIAN BOYD
Teaching English to Mixed Ability Sections Beyond S2 23
TOM MEENAGH
English for the Slower Learner . 31
ALAN MACGILLIVRAY
Letters from a Small Country . . 37
Poem by WILLIAM BARR . . . 36
NOTES AND NEWS 42
REVIEW
The Changing Face of English Teaching 45
Primary 46
Slower Learners 48
Basic Skills 49
Course Books 50
Theory and Practice . . . 52
Poetry Anthologies 54
Short Stories and Prose . . . 55
Criticism 57
Study Aids 59
Magazine and Scrapbooks . . 59
Scottish Writing 60

Illustrations by Callum Campbell, English Department, Craigroyston Secondary, Edinburgh.

Price in U.K.: 40p per issue. £1.20 per volume (incl. postage). Overseas: $2.00 per issue, $6.00 per year, or equivalent in sterling.

Cheques and Money Orders should be made out to Moray House College of Education.

Last of the Summer Institutes?

We record in "Notes and News" that the Summer Institute planned for St Andrews in June and July 1977 will not now take place. The directing panel of the Institute, chaired by James McIntosh, Dundee College of Education, has taken this decision with the greatest reluctance and the sharpest regret.

But it was inevitable. The Institute, to retain its character, requires over a hundred teachers to be in residence for two weeks. Preliminary soundings taken among Regional Authorities indicated that at the most optimistic estimate only 32 teachers would be supported in their attendance. And since the Institute fell in a financial year for which budgets were not complete, a number of authorities reserved the right to withdraw even the little support they were offering. Since the cost of two weeks' residence is likely to be beyond the resources of teachers willing to pay their own expenses, there was no choice but to cancel.

A National Course in English, however, will be offered in place of the Summer Institute. It will run for a week from Sunday 26th June to Friday 1st July 1977 and the venue will be the Andrew Melville Hall of Residence, University of St Andrews. It will be geared to an attendance of fifty. The course will be fundamentally a workshop, with participants being asked to concentrate on the production of an "Instrument of Policy" for their own English Departments in the light, not only of the Bullock Report, but also of the recommendations of the Munn Committee on the Curriculum at S3 and S4, and of the Dunning Committee on Assessment at S4, both of whose reports should be published by that time.

The course will be a shared experience with all participants attending to the same issues. These, it is intended, will be the basic concerns of English teachers: speaking and writing, reading and listening. The course will focus on these issues in the context of S1 and S2 (a day and a half); S3 and S4 (a day and a half) and on the 16+ group for a day. Each section of the course will be run by two-three "tutors" who will be, as well, participants in the rest of the course. Their job will be to introduce appropriate curriculum materials, but also to keep their "students'" minds on matters other

than content: philosophy, methods and assessment.

There is every reason to believe that such a course will be of great value. If the participants are teachers who can influence others when they return to their own regions, the cumulative effect of such a course might be very considerable. So is there any reason to mourn the passing of the Summer Institute?

Of course there is. The Summer Institute was a prime example of more meaning better—more people engaged on more activities for more time generated more ideas, more insight, more understanding, *and more hope*, than a shorter, smaller course can do.

The '77 Institute would have offered 28 course options from which participants would have chosen three. Thirty-one tutors would have been involved, and, had all gone to plan, about 140 course members.

The Institute was conceived on this scale in the late '60s. Indeed, the original conception was even grander. The initial proposal made by Dr W. A. Gatherer, then H.M.I. National English specialist, was that the first Institute, at Hamilton College of Education in 1969, should run for *three* weeks.

The conception was not as simplistic as the slogan "more means better" may make it seem. It was the outcome of an analysis of the way that previous National Courses in English had proved effective. These were the now almost legendary "Chesters" courses held throughout the years of the sixties first in Chesters House, Bearsden, and later in Jordanhill College, Glasgow. These events set the standards of comfort in accommodation and amenity that are now taken for granted. Perhaps they are best remembered for the standards of conviviality, informality and friendliness they created. But they set standards, too, of quality in lecturing and teaching.

Yet, important though that last feature was, it turned out not to be the most important. What was more so was the simple fact of bringing teachers together and providing a focus for sharing their own thinking and their own experience with each other. The "extra-curricular" discussion in coffee lounge and bar (a great breakthrough!) *was* more important than lecture and seminar whose value lay in the stimulus to thinking they provided.

The thinking that took place as a result of such stimulus in such a setting was valuable in at least three ways. First it provided a necessary recharge of enthusiasm for the subject, an enthusiasm easily eroded by the day to day pressures of class teaching. All teaching is necessarily a compromise between what one hopes to achieve and what *can* be achieved given the constraints of time, resources and, indeed, the pupils one works with. All the more important that there should be a time to think about the subject *without* compromise, so that one understands the nature of the compromise that is being made.

Secondly, the courses provided an antidote to the institutional pressures of the schooling system. These tend to reduce education to a process akin to an industrial one, and tend to make educators concentrate on "system maintenance" and to forget what the system is for.

Thirdly, they provided a setting in which teachers could influence each other. Since these days, research has indicated what many felt intuitively, that *contagion* was the best mode of spreading curriculum innovation. This is well brought out in a recent publication, *Curriculum Innovation*, by Barry Macdonald and Rob Walker (Open Books, 1976).

The Summer Institute, because it involved more teachers doing more things, sharing more ideas, meeting more people from more institutions, magnified all these virtues.

Moreover, the Chesters courses addressed themselves to a simpler situation. Schools then were cool, calm and selective. Senior secondaries, if not junior secondaries, had a clear sense of their purposes. Staffing in English departments was stable. English teachers were English teachers and not, as so often happens now, Assistant Heads, Guidance Teachers and probationers. They worked on the basis of well-established traditions. There were no problems deriving from mixed-ability classes, reluctant ROSLA detainees, or a terminal examination designed for 30% of the population forced to serve close on 80%.

The Summer Institute is more needed now than ever it was. We must accept, of course, the brutal economic facts that have rendered necessary the cancellation of the 1977 Institute, but we should regard this break as a temporary one only. We should encourage Regional authorities to recognise the importance of the Institute and so to arrange their priorities as to make its re-establishment possible within the next couple of years.

SCOTTISH CENTRAL COMMITTEE ON ENGLISH

The Role of English in the Curriculum at S III and S IV

A Submission to the Working Party under the Chairmanship of Mr Munn

Preamble

We have found it difficult to construct this submission for two reasons that arise from the remit of your working party.

The first is the result of the remit's focus on S3 and S4. We believe that the curriculum of the secondary school should be seen as a continuum from S1 to S4 and beyond and we would urge your committee so to regard it. We are aware, of course, of the possibility that the formulation of your remit was based on the assumption that all is well with the curriculum at S1 and S2. If so, this is an assumption that we do not share, either as it affects the curriculum as a whole or the teaching of English in particular. We are aware, for instance, of the unsatisfactory "join" between P7 and S1 when the child must adjust from studying broad spectra of experience under the guidance of a single teacher to the study of a range of individual subjects each represented by a different teacher. We are further aware that within English classrooms in S1 and S2 there remain to be solved many of the problems posed by the fact of comprehensive schooling, by the introduction of mixed ability classes, by developments in English teaching methods (as summarised in the appendix to this submission) and by developments in linguistic scholarship whose full implications are yet to be assimilated.

The second difficulty arises from your request that we show "the place in the curriculum that the Central Committee see this subject holding." This forces us to choose between arguing out our views on the *whole* curriculum and then stating our case for English in it; *or* making assumptions about the nature of curriculum and limiting our submission to English itself.

We have chosen the latter course (as being, from our point of view, more manageable and from yours, more humane) but we feel it necessary to state one unargued assumption about the nature of the curriculum. It is that we anticipate a "core" of required areas of study around which will be constellated a number of elective courses. The "core" will occupy a larger part of the timetable at S1 and S2 than it will in S3 and S4 where the number of elective courses will be increased.

We propose to argue that English should occupy a centrally important place in this core from S1 to S4. To say this is not *necessarily* to say that there must be at all stages and for all pupils a large number of slots on the timetable labelled "English." It is to say that if some basis for organising the curriculum other than the traditional subject one is selected then the qualities and procedures that characterise good English teaching must be prominently present in the new approach.

English in the Curriculum at S3 and S4

Our assertion that English should retain a place of central importance in the curriculum is based on three main grounds: (i) that English offers essential basic skills; (ii) that it offers a kind of nourishment especially important for the personal development of pupils of the age under consideration; and (iii) that it contributes in an important way to the socialising of the pupil.

This view of the role of English is based primarily on the aims of English teaching as set out and developed in the five Bulletins of the Central Committee on English:[1] "first, to develop as far as the pupils are capable the skills involved in reading, writing, speaking and listening; second, to provide experiences which will enrich the lives of the pupils and contribute to their personal growth."[2] (A view similar to this has recently and neatly been called a *competence* and *growth* model for English teaching,[3] and we use these terms as convenient headings below). To these we have added the aim of socialisation. By this term we do not mean the securing of an unthinking social conformity, but rather an informed, questioning but responsible attitude to social reality.

Competence, growth and socialisation are closely interrelated and we discuss them separately below as a matter of convenience. It is worth emphasising however that underlying these

divisions is our sense of the unity of English, and of the importance of that unity. Added to that is our sense of the uniqueness of English as a school subject. This uniqueness can be described in more than one way. But it is perhaps noteworthy that it is the only subject concerned with intellectual growth that has art works (literature, drama and, increasingly, film) at its centre. This linkage of the cognitive and the affective is what gives English special significance.

Competence

English is concerned with competence in speaking, listening, reading and writing. It is only in the English classroom that *priority* in time and attention is given to these skills. If the skills are to be developed fully, however, the lead given in the English classroom must be followed by teachers of other subjects attending appropriately to the language used in their own classrooms. "Literacy," says the Bullock Report, "is a corporate responsibility, in which the leadership should be provided by teachers with specialist knowledge but in which every other teacher shares."[4] The same may be said of oral English. As long ago as 1967 the C.C.C. emphasised that "listening and speaking are central to the learning process."[5] Since then much published work has reinforced, extended and refined this view.[6] First it has shown the close relationship between talk and other aspects of English (*e.g.* tentative discussion may be an important stage in reaching the meaning of a passage for reading); secondly it has shown the importance of talk in developing understanding generally;[7] thirdly the full range of language functions[8] can be developed only by including speech.

The attention given to literacy and oracy in S3 and S4 will not be greater or less than in S1 and S2. What will differ is the degree of complexity of the matter under discussion (which may in turn produce a more analytic attention to language).

Growth

Pupils in S3 and S4 are in mid-adolescence, moving out of a dependency relationship with adults towards their own adulthood. They can be highly critical of parents, teachers and other authority figures, and of the social institutions within the context of which authority is established. They need means whereby they can develop a sense of their own identity and means whereby they can extend and refine their notions of adult behaviour.

. . . highly critical . . .
. . . a sense of their own identity . . .

English provides for these needs through literature and through the creative work of the pupils themselves.

In stories, novels, poems, plays, in film and TV drama, young people can explore the behaviour of others, and possible ways of behaving themselves. The value of this activity has been well expressed thus: "true or fictional, all forms of narrative invite us to be onlookers joining in the evaluation of some possibility of experience"[9] and elaborated as follows: "The reading of narrative sets up and maintains a constant interplay between imaginative involvement and impersonal detachment, and it is this fusion of roles that makes it possible for narrative in general to exert such a far reaching influence upon us."[10] These judgments apply equally to forms of literature other than narrative.

Creative work in writing and drama fulfils a similar function. These activities permit and encourage the exploration and development of the pupils' sense of themselves and the nature of their personal relationships.

These comments imply that literature (including film) is being used at this stage as vicarious experience, as material to reflect upon; that creative writing and drama are seen as modes of reflection. It follows that "growth" is conceived as, among other things, intellectual growth: a developing power to derive meaning from experience. Because the development is an intellectual one, it in turn underpins and creates development in the language skills. The obverse is also true. Competence fosters growth; incompetence retards it. Competence and "growth" develop together.

"Growth" is not, however, restricted to

intellectual or cognitive development. Literature speaks to the emotions and contributes, as has been well argued,[11] to the "very culture of the feelings." We would extend Harding's argument above about the value of literature from the *intellectual* activity of "the evaluation of some possibility of experience" to include the education of the emotions through the discovery of new possibilities of feeling. It is the "fusion" of the intellectual and the emotional that makes it possible for literature to exercise such "far-reaching influence."

Socialisation

The fusion of the intellectual and the emotional, of the roles of spectator and participant that characterise work in English is of considerable moment in what English has to offer in the process of socialisation of the pupil.

Socialisation we take to mean the preparation of the child for his life as an adult in the contemporary world. How best to do this depends on, among other things, the concept one has of the "contemporary world."

Even the most superficial analysis of modern society will reveal that power has shifted from its traditional seats and is distributed in ways never previously found. Accompanying this shift are changes in attitude to authority, to established institutions, to received ideas. Whether these changes are for good or ill is not the question. They exist and are part of the social situation to which schools must address themselves.

This means that all pupils are to be educated for power and social responsibility. No one is any longer merely a hewer of wood. This in turn means that many of the traditional distinctions between "academic" and "non-academic" become irrelevant.

In addition to the skills which are essential for social survival, English is of particular value in helping pupils to achieve an understanding of society. Literature, drama and the creative activities associated with them speak to the individual social condition through the concrete and the particular instance. Abstraction and generalisation, which provide barriers to the understanding especially for "weaker" pupils, are avoided.

The questioning attitude that is so much a mark of the contemporary social scene is itself partly a product of universal education. It behoves education to help individuals to make their questions informed and responsible. The particular contribution that English can offer in this respect is a development in the power

. . . an informed, questioning but responsible attitude to social reality

of imagination; Phenix has said "the cultivation of the life of the imagination is the distinctive office and ultimate aim of general education," and in so saying he confirms the central importance of English.

One cognitive contribution to the understanding of society that English can make is through a study of the part that language plays in it. The English teacher is the best qualified to explain continually and methodically the nature of the language and its social power. It is to be admitted that, as things stand, this is the least adequately developed aspect of English teaching, and the present S.C.C.E. hopes that its successors in office will take this matter as their central developmental concern.

The importance of socialisation has consequences for the methodology of English teaching (as doubtless of other subjects). It is not enough that pupils should "know" about society, should "imagine" possibilities of behaviour. They must also act in preparation for their role in society. This means at the level of the school curriculum they will make real choices among the options offered. Similar options might be offered *within* subjects including subject English. Equally important, however, is that the methodology and organisation of the English classroom should allow real decisions to be made by pupils about how tasks are to be undertaken and how problems are to be solved. These decisions are to be acted upon and

the outcomes of various alternatives are to be discussed. This is another area of English teaching in which development is needed, and which we hope will be given attention in the near future.

The Further Study of English

It may be that the stress we have given to personal growth and socialisation will be seen as constituting a threat to the very real values that were present in the traditional academic study of English. Such study was organised by arranging texts, drawn from a canon of "great books," to be studied in a hierarchy of difficulty, so that the pupil progressed from, let us say, *Treasure Island* in S1 to, let us say, *Bleak House* in S6. By this procedure university entrants were assured of having encountered some at least of the most important landmarks in literary history.

We respond to this concern by pointing to the inadequacy of using preparation for university entrance as the basis for curriculum design. We add that the *quality* of the literature selected for the kind of work we envisage will continue to be of prime importance. Thirdly we insist that an approach that allows the learner to discover the *significance* of language and literature to himself as an individual and social being is the best preparation for the further study of these subjects.

Assessment

It is unlikely that a single public examination will be able to assess the whole range of attainment in English. To introduce more than one examination (on the model of the present system in England) is undesirable. We look with hope, therefore, to the work currently being done to investigate the feasibility of a system of in-school assessment, externally moderated, for at least part of the examination.

English and Other Subjects

We have mentioned a relationship between English and other subjects under the heading of "competence." We are aware that "growth" as we have defined it is a direct concern in such classrooms as Religious Education, Guidance and Modern Studies. Socialisation is the concern of the whole school. English, however, ought to make a distinctive contribution in two ways: (i) through the range of literature it can present and (ii) by the special alertness of the English teacher to the role of language in acquiring learning,[12] and his special understanding of the nature of language in its social function. We believe therefore in the desirability of co-operation with other departments of the school *provided* appropriate answers can be given to these questions: "If English is to be associated with three or four other subjects what is likely to be the effect upon the pupil's experience of oral and written language? Will this experience be restricted or expanded by the demands of the other constituents? Will the teachers be able to create situations in which literature illuminates the other elements in the course and in turn gains a dimension from them? How well equipped are the teachers to handle what becomes an exacting situation?"[13] Our attitude then to co-operative enterprises, to various forms of "integration" involving the English teacher as part of a team, and to inter-disciplinary enquiry is one of cautious sympathy. We add that the experience of individual members of this committee has not always been entirely happy in such activities, and where they have, this it has been the outcome of prolonged and painstaking preparatory discussion among the participating teachers, between whom there has existed mutual respect and friendship.

A Note on Some Considerations of Theoretical Descriptive Categories

We are aware that currently the most fashionable method of describing the curriculum is in terms of the "objectives" model (define your objectives; select your content; adopt an appropriate method; evaluate the results). We are uneasy about describing English in these terms aware as we are that stating detailed objectives for the reading of a play or a story is rarely fruitful since the teacher's purpose is to explore the meaning of individual experience. Stenhouse's account of the limited usefulness of "objectives" applies sharply to English.[14]

Bloom's is the best known of taxonomies of objectives.[15] We do not find that it (at least in the cognitive domain) is particularly helpful. It assumes a hierarchy of objectives which does not match the reality of English teaching and learning.

Nor is English easily placed in the school curriculum by reference to such epistemological categorisations as Phenix's[16] or Hirst's. The education that English offers transcends the

limitations of categories. It must do so if it is to respond to the complexity and variety of the needs of individual pupils, and if it is to utilise the complexity of language and the detailed individuality of the experience offered by literature.

NOTES

1. Bulletin no. 1, *English in the Secondary School: Early Stages*, 1967.
   Bulletin no. 2, *The Teaching of Literature*, 1968.
   Bulletin no. 3, *English for the Young School Leaver*, 1970.
   Bulletin no. 4, *English in the Secondary School: Later Stages*, 1971.
   Bulletin no. 5, *The Teaching of English Language*, 1972. Central Committee on English, H.M.S.O.
2. Bulletin no. 3: page 11.
3. Adams and Pearce: *Every English Teacher*, O.U.P., 1974.
4. *A Language for Life*, page 26, paragraph 2.30.
5. Bulletin no. 1: page 10.
6. *E.g.* Barnes *et al*: *Language, the Learner and the School*, Penguin, rev. ed., 1971.
7. *E.g.* Schools Council Writing Across the Curriculum Project: *From Information to Understanding*, London University Institute of Education English Department, 2nd ed., 1974.
8. *E.g.* M. A. K. Halliday: *Explorations in the Functions of Language*, Edward Arnold, 1973.
9. D. W. Harding: Psychological processes in the reading of fiction, *British Journal of Aesthetics* 2 (1962), pp. 133-147.
10. Schools Council Working Paper 52: *Children's Reading Interests*, 1975, page 43.
11. David Holbrook: *English for Maturity*, Cambridge University Press, 1967.
12. *A Language for Life*: Bullock has recommended (page 529, no. 138) that:
    "In the secondary school, all subject teachers need to be aware of:
    (i) the linguistic processes by which their pupils acquire information and understanding, and the implications for the teacher's own use of language (12.1-12.2; 12.4-12.10);
    (ii) the reading demands of their own subjects, and ways in which the pupils can be helped to meet them (12.7-12,8; 15.8; 8.9; 8.11-8.19)."
    We add that the English specialists are at present the only teachers with training that approaches these requirements.
13. *A Language for Life*, page 221, paragraph 15.4. See also *The English Department in the Scottish Secondary School*, H.M.S.O., 1975, pp. 35-36: Liaison within the school.
14. Lawrence Stenhouse: Some limitations of the use of objectives in curricular planning, *Paedagogica Europaea*, Vol. 6, 1970-71, pp. 73-83.
15. Bloom (B.S.) and others: *Taxonomy of educational objectives*, Handbooks 1 and 2, Longman, 1956.
16. Phenix, Philip H.: *Realms of Meaning: Philosophy of the Curriculum for General Education*, McGraw Hill, 1964.

APPENDIX: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ENGLISH CURRICULUM

Developments in linguistic study and evidence of creative ability of young people have combined to produce considerable change in the philosophy and practice of English teaching.

At the level of ideology, it is now recognised that language skills are best developed in a real (or convincing) context relevant to pupils' concerns rather than by exercises, however soundly based on analysis of the total skills. Associated with this is the growth in awareness of the importance of spoken English in the development of literacy. This has led at a practical level to:

(a) a reduction in the teaching of formal grammar
(b) an increasing use of techniques designed to create realistic contexts such as:
    (i) project work
    (ii) thematic work
    (iii) the use of a single work of fiction or drama as a core for a full range of activities
(c) a sharp increase in the study of contemporary and recent literature
(d) considerable increase in personal expressive writing
(e) considerable increase in oral work of varying degrees of formality
(f) some increase in the use of audio-visual materials and aids.

These are general points. Experimentation and change in S3 and S4 have been less than in early stages and at S6. In certificate classes the most marked developments have been:

(a) an increase in the use of modern texts
(b) an increase in the use of the thematic approach.

Both of these tendencies have been encouraged by O-Grade examining.

In non-certificate classes there have been some interdisciplinary developments (*e.g.* the use of the Heinemann/Schools Council Humanities Curriculum Project); but such work appears to have been restricted to a minority of schools.

Noteworthy in the midst of these changes has been the open-mindedness and adaptability of English teachers, accompanied by a properly critical attitude which has produced, and is producing, continuous modification of the premises and procedures of the "new English."

A Whole School Language Policy

The article that follows was prepared in the first instance as a discussion document for selected schools in the Lothian region. Its usefulness is such that it deserves a much wider circulation.

PATRICK J McLAUGHLIN
Adviser in English, Lothian Region

REASONS WHY A WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY ON LANGUAGE IS NEEDED

Standards

The Bullock Report asserts that a large number of pupils are emerging from our schools without the language skills necessary to cope adequately with the complexities of modern society.

There is no evidence that standards of literacy have *fallen*; but there is, significantly, a gap developing between the literacy requirements of our society and the comparatively static linguistic competence of a large number of our pupils.

In spite of our "electric" culture, most of our information still comes from print sources, *e.g.* newspapers, books, notices and posters of all kinds. Interestingly, in the age of the tannoy, there are more school notices issued than ever before—not, as you might expect, less.

Language development is directly linked to the growth of analytical thought and, therefore, intelligence.

This is not to indulge in speculation as to whether language is a pre-requisite of thought or merely close-knit with it. At all events the following propositions are true and important to all teachers:

(a) the higher processes of thought are certainly achieved through the interaction of linguistic with mental and perceptual powers, and

(b) language presents the most visible indication of thought.

Success in *all* school subjects is, to a large extent, success in the language of the subject.

How often do we hear the complaint from teachers in many different subject fields, "I know he knows the answer, but he can't seem to get it down on paper." Frequently this failure, which has devastating effects on pupils' performances in the national examinations, is not due to a failure to understand the maths or the science, but to negotiate the language of the question.

This leads us to conclude that if the language ability improves, so also will the maths. Conversely, it is also true that general ability in language will grow, if carried out in the context of meaningful activity. The talk which takes place around an operation on a lathe or in the course of an experiment in science is usually more purposive and has, therefore, greater educational value than either idle chat or the language which emanates from any simulation exercise or otherwise contrived situation.

Language skills, and especially the essential skill of reading, are, as we now know, not acquired once and for all at a particular age, but continuously develop over the whole period of our life and on a broad front.

Reading cannot be left to the primary school and the English department; it is every teacher's

Reading cannot be left to . . . the English department

business at all stages. The only one who can adequately teach the reading of scientific scripts or papers is a scientist. If he or she fails to do so, there is a permanent gap in the reading competence of the pupil for which no amount of extra work in the English department will ever really compensate.

Attitude to Language

Teachers in every subject should have a sound awareness of language and how it operates.

There is a great deal of misinformation about how our language works, its rules and its propriety on any given occasion. Teachers of all subjects should have a working knowledge of the basic structures of English and of the part played by different varieties, *e.g.* standard English and the languages of particular social and occupational groups.

For this purpose it is by no means necessary, or even particularly desirable, that they be turned into experts in linguistics. In any case this would be a hopelessly unrealistic aim.

Communicating this awareness to pupils should be part of the process of secondary education.

In social studies, for example, there would be a great deal of point to including a linguistic "map" of the school's catchment area in a project on environmental studies. Such a map would show the different linguistic "registers" which are to be found in the area and how they are distributed, both socially and topographically.

Pupil Skills to be Developed

Speaking

Much research has shown that pupils do not in fact talk very much in our classrooms. It has been estimated that for above two-thirds of the time in most classrooms one person does all the talking—the teacher. In the meagre amount of time available for pupil participation in the dialogue, many pupils are left out altogether and become increasingly adept throughout their school life at avoiding most occasions of speech by a technique well-known in other quarters as the "body swerve." This virtual silence on the part of a large number of our pupils seriously hampers their full human development. Unless our experiences, including the experience of new ideas or concepts, are explored through language, through formulation and reformulation in words, and especially the spoken word, then these experiences remain unassimilated and, therefore, to a large extent ununderstandable.

It would assist our pupils very materially to cope not only with life, but also their school work, if a great deal more emphasis was placed upon their need to express themselves both in small-group and class discussion. For this purpose, teachers may require to investigate their current classroom practice more critically and urgently develop new techniques to encourage pupil participation in all aspects of their lessons. There is, by the way, evidence to suggest that this situation is worse in the academic subjects, including English, than it is in science-based subjects, like physics or technical, where opportunities for speech tend to occur more naturally.

Listening

This is a vital human skill which is much underestimated because it seems as untaxing and as natural as breathing. However, hearing and listening are two quite separate things, as any teacher knows. Listening is a complex activity which involves the comprehension and selection of aurally-received information for the purpose of present understanding and future use. In this respect, it is, therefore, strongly connected with the memory faculty. If all teachers were to incorporate into their teaching simple exercises in the ability to listen and mentally record, then there seems no doubt that a great improvement could be effected not only in the pupils' performance in their subjects, but also in the development of a human skill which is commonly required to a greater or lesser extent at all levels in adult life.

Writing

It is more necessary now than it has ever been that all pupils should be helped to acquire a basic level of skill in the writing of English. This *basic* level would include the ability to write a sentence; to construct a simple paragraph; to use, with some competence at least, the basic elements of punctuation, *viz.* the period, the comma and the question mark; to use capitals correctly; to spell the more common words in daily use in our language; and to understand and be able to conform to the conventions of lay-out of such essential adult tasks as the writing of a letter or the filling-in of a form.

There is no doubt that even these modest standards are scarcely being achieved in writing done by some pupils throughout the school. Some grounds exist for believing that because pupils associate writing with "English," the standard of the writing they do in other subjects

is deliberately allowed to lapse. When they leave the English room many pupils, it would appear, experience, with respect to their com-compositional powers, a feeling of relief akin to that which a man might who on returning from church swops his formal Sunday suit for a favourite jersey and a pair of old lounging trousers.

School-wide agreement about a minimum standard of correctness in the writing of English and a degree of insistence on this standard in every department would do more to effect a transformation in our pupils' ability to write their native language than almost any other measure.

It would also help if other subjects were to permit more opportunities for *expressive writing*, the language of personal statement. All too often the conventions of formal scientific or technical prose are insisted upon at early stages in school and in subject quite needlessly. Most people will never require mastery of these conventions, such as the use of the passive and other depersonalising techniques in science reports, and those who do can acquire them quickly enough when they are necessary. On the other hand most young pupils will write quite naturally in a subjective way, even in the context of science. At this stage it is important that the pupil think and talk and write his way into the science. The formal technicalities of science language ought not to be allowed to become a barrier between the concepts and the fresh, probing mind of the learner.

Conversely English departments must place more emphasis on *transactional English*, the English of reports and other formal or business occasions. By their almost exclusive interest in *expressive* and *poetic* English, English departments have seemed to despise the other forms and to encourage a two-culture approach to language, the "fine" value-sodden writing in the English department being unnecessarily and unfairly contrasted with the more fustian productions of the other subjects. In fact, writing, like speech, has merit strictly relative to its purpose. Writing letters of application or the minutes of a meeting are tasks which call into play compositional skills no less admirable in their way than those required for "free" or creative writing. By giving pupils practice in the analysis of the best models of *transactional English*, English teachers could draw attention to the high level of skill required to master this vital prose form.

Reading

Every teacher is a teacher of reading. The skill required to read a scientific treatise or a geography worksheet is a specific skill, involving the ability to negotiate a specialised vocabulary and highly particular semantic clusters and syntactical forms. The person most highly motivated to teach this skill and best equipped to do so on the basis of his expertise in this area of language skill is the science or the geography teacher.

Naturally, no one has any right to expect such teachers to turn themselves into experts on the reading process—few even amongst English teachers could claim to be that. However, by the adoption of a few comparatively simple practices and expedients, not in the long run time-consuming, their pupils' ability to cope with the reading requirements of their subject would be improved, perhaps dramatically.

A beginning might be made by looking at text-books and worksheets in use in particular subjects. Whenever studies are made of classroom print materials it is often found that many pupils fail because they are expected to read text-books which are often several reading-age years above the reading competence they are ever likely to achieve. Much the same is true of worksheets and question papers devised by teachers.

Even where these texts are revised to meet the real reading possibilities of the majority of children, there is still the problem of helping pupils to negotiate an unusual use of words of an unfamiliar form of language. Most frequently, teachers help their pupils get round the difficulty, which is a reading difficulty, by giving the pupil a verbal explanation. This by-passing of the print problem may help the pupil in the short-term but does nothing to improve his reading competence in the subject, a competence which will be called for on many occasions when the teacher is not present or available for consultation. It would be better in the event of such a difficulty arising to force the attention of the pupil back into the print. When he has solved the difficulty at the print level, he has had a most valuable lesson in reading from which he will go on reaping the benefit all of his life.

Any time spent by a subject teacher taking his pupils through a paragraph in his or her subject to elicit meaning or to show how the sequence of ideas is built up would be well repaid. If all teachers were to do this, even periodically, the effect on pupils' performances

in the national examinations would almost certainly be enormous, due to the multiplying effect of reinforcement on learning.

Vocabulary

Words are the basic semantic units of a language. They are also the symbolic means by which we describe and control both objective reality and the inner world of feeling and intellect. To extend the word-hoard of our pupils is, therefore, not only to give them a greater linguistic range and competence, but actually to increase their potential for self-understanding and mastery. Each new word acquired provides the possibility of more refinement of thought or sensibility.

Of course, not every word to which we are exposed becomes part of our vocabulary. Where there is no basis for understanding a word or no felt need for it, the word will seldom take root. Thus, words, like "fascism" or "permissiveness," though beamed widely at all elements of the population through radio and television, relate to an adult experience of the world and so, having little or no meaning or usefulness for young pupils, do not normally become part of their functioning vocabulary.

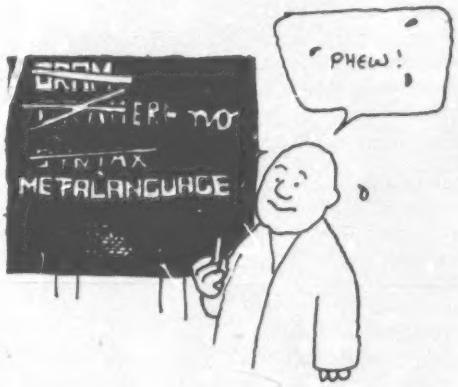
Sometimes, however, the word is not taken in simply because it is unfamiliar or seemingly difficult. In these cases it would help if teachers of all disciplines took a little extra time when introducing a key word to their pupils to draw attention to it by various means, including showing them the elements out of which it is built and pointing out those words to which it is related. Thus in mathematics the word "coefficient" might be shown to be composed of two elements "co" and "efficient." "Co" is found in many words which the pupils already know, *e.g.* "cooperate," "correlate," perhaps "coordinate." "Efficient" is known already to them in other contexts, *e.g.* "He is an efficient driver," "Do this with speed and efficiency." In this way the word is more easily understood and is fixed in the mind by a place being found for it amongst existing words which act as a trigger for it in the future.

It would be helpful if each pupil was encouraged to build his or her own dictionary of new words acquired in the course of their schooling. Such a dictionary would be most valuable in that it would encompass in its pages progress made in language over a whole spectrum of subjects. It would establish the unity of language.

STARTING POINTS FOR A LANGUAGE POLICY DOCUMENT

The Need for a Language for Learning

If teachers in all departments are going to refer to language features and the way words are built up, there is a clear need for a *meta-language of learning*. This would consist of a simple vocabulary of language terms agreed by the staff and taught to all pupils as the basis for all discussion of language in the school. Such terms would include noun, verb, suffix, prefix



and, especially, syllable. Probably, these terms, once identified, would be taught specifically in the English department, but after a due period of time it would be reasonable for teachers in every subject to expect that an understanding of these terms was part of every pupil's equipment for education. This development would undoubtedly have the effect of making language work in departments other than English much easier to conduct and, therefore, perhaps more attractive to contemplate.

Print Use Policy

Most schools already do have a policy for controlling resources. Print, as the major resource for learning in any school, should not be omitted from such a scheme. There ought to be someone, perhaps the librarian, who is aware of the print requirements for all projects and courses of study being conducted or planned in all departments. These print resources could then be marshalled in the best interests of the pupil or the group of pupils concerned.

Creating a centre for information on print

EJ 14

use throughout the school would lead to teachers in all subjects having a better idea of what their colleagues are trying to achieve in the different subject fields. A greater coordination of work across subject boundaries could be expected to result.

Punctuation

Punctuation can only be taught across the school as a whole, because problems arise not out of general principles, but in specific situations in writing done in all subjects.

Even if every teacher in the school did no more in this field than insist on the correct use of full stops and capitals in all the pupils' work presented to them, then the transformation in the pupils' ability to write coherently would be instant. A programme on punctuation would not have to be ambitious to show results.

Handwriting

This is not a trivial matter. First of all, a pupil's work must be legible to be appreciated by the reader. No less important in this connection is the effect of clear handwriting on a pupil's self-motivation. Poor writing often signalises a pupil's lack of interest: conversely, there are few pupils who do not wish a piece of work which they feel has value to look as good as possible.

It would be very desirable that a common handwriting style for use in all schools in the catchment area should be evolved. This would have the added advantage that it would draw the primary feeder schools into the discussion, since they would obviously have to help decide upon and then teach this style in the first instance.

As with punctuation, a school-wide insistence on well-produced writing would have an immediate effect on the quality of the pupils' work and on the morale of staff and pupils alike.

Assessment

Assessment at all stages is vital to pupil progress. The testing instrument should be flexible and comprehensive. It should give guidance to *pupil* and *teacher* and not simply provide for the rank ordering of pupils. A pupil profile ought to reflect each pupil's developing skill over the whole field of language activities and pinpoint his or her special difficulties. The remedying of these difficulties through specific schemes of assistance would thus be made possible. In the absence of such information very often a great deal of time is spent on teaching pupils' aspects of language in which they are not deficient, while those difficulties they do experience are not attended to.

Grouping Systems

Part of the discussion on language throughout the school will involve consideration of the principles of pupil grouping, since any policy devised will be based on giving help to individual pupils rather than to class-loads of children. It would be up to each school to decide on those forms of grouping, whether mixed ability, setting or banding, which most suit their pupils. It is, however, vital that there should be staff agreement about this system. As the Bullock Report contends, it does not really matter which system one uses, it is being systematic that counts. This is also the message of the recent Lancaster Report.

THE POLICY DOCUMENT

While the policy is developing an actual document should be emerging. This would be a clear, if modest, statement of what the school intends to do in the matter of language throughout the school. Each department in the school would have to be, at least metaphorically, a signatory to this document. In the light of this it is better that there should be a compact document with a comparatively short list of principles to which all teachers can give ready assent, than a more elaborate production which commands the respect or enthusiasm only of a limited number of members of staff. The success of the programme will depend absolutely on all action being taken by the *whole school*. In this respect the adoption of a whole school language policy is like those cycle pursuit races in which it is the last man home who decides the team's success—not the first.

THE ORGANISATION

The Leader

To indicate the importance of the programme and for other reasons, it is desirable that the leader of the team should be a member of the senior staff, probably an Assistant Head Teacher.

It is on the whole better that such a person is not connected directly with the English department, since it is important that there should be no impression gained that this programme is

emanating from that department. Having a team leader with a background in some other subject field would indicate that language is everybody's business.

Form of Structure

Although a coordinating committee is essential, great pains should be taken to ensure that they speak for and are in touch with the larger constituency of the whole school. If a gap were to open up between a knowledgeable elité and the mass of the staff, then the point of a whole school policy would be lost.

It would be for each individual school to devise its own structure, bearing in mind this key requirement.

Period of Time Involved

Such a programme as has been outlined would go on operating for the foreseeable history of the school. So also, of course, would the great good which would come of it.

But perhaps the great advantage of such a policy is that it can be begun almost immediately; the very day after agreement on any aspect of the policy was reached, it could be put into operation throughout the school. The benefits to pupils of this policy would have begun to be realised before that first day was out.

In preparing this discussion paper for all teachers, the author has drawn on a wide range of sources. In particular he acknowledges his debt to M. Q. Cramb, H.M.I.; to Professor James Britton and his associates at London University Institute of Education (especially in *The Development of writing Abilities 11-18*, Macmillan, 1975); and to Michael Marland, Headmaster, Woodberry Down School, London, whose forthcoming book *Language Across the Curriculum*, Heinemann, 1977, is an important extended examination of issues raised in the paper.

Language Across the Curriculum—Guidelines for Schools is a pamphlet costing 60p published by Ward Lock Educational in association with N.A.T.E. It is addressed to all sorts and conditions of teachers. Its 38 pages may prove to be of major importance in raising the quality of education right across the board, since as it claims itself, "paying attention to language *means* paying attention to learning."

We will review it in our next issue.

The Last Ten Years

GEOFFREY THORNTON
Senior Adviser (English) Cheshire L.E.A.

I spoke last summer to a DES* English 11-16 Course. Michael Marland had opened the Course on the previous evening with a talk entitled "Bullock and After."

I began my own contribution by remarking that, although Bullock was immensely significant in its own right, it nevertheless took its place in a stream of books about language and learning, and the relationship between them, going back ten years or more. The year 1966 saw the publication of Flower: *Language and Education* and Whitehead: *The Disappearing Dais.* In 1967 came Dixon: *Growth through English*, in 1969 Barnes, Britton and Rosen: *Language, the Learner and the School* and in 1970 Britton: *Language and Learning.*

Wilkinson published *The Foundations of Language* in 1971, the year that *Language in Use* was published. This was followed in 1972 by *Exploring Language*, and Creber: *Lost for Words.* The year 1973 saw the Rosens': *The Language of Primary School Children*, and 1974 Halliday's: *Language and Social Man.* Nineteen seventy-five was the year of Bullock, and also of *The Development of Writing Abilities* (11-18), the report from the London Institute's Schools Council Project on Written Language. Early in 1976 came Barnes: *From Communication to Curriculum.* This is a highly selective list, which omits some distinguished names, but it serves to indicate something of what has been written in the last ten years. (Had I been speaking to a Scottish audience, I would have included the stream of Bulletins from the Central Committee on English, the first of which appeared in 1967).

I then went on to argue that, despite all this work, remarkably few of the insights made available seem to have percolated through to the classroom to improve the general quality of English teaching. As a subject, English too often remains an incoherent mixture of creative writing, literature and exercises, with both teacher and pupil seemingly uncertain what the pupil is, or ought to be, getting out of it all. English teachers are frequently unable to give their pupils the help they need to overcome the difficulties they encounter in meeting the linguistic demands made upon them in school. (One of the more embarrassing consequences of the success of the Adult Literacy Project is the number of appeals for help now being received from pupils still at school. Parents ring up to say that their children have been told by the school that "no extra help is available." One boy wrote, "I have troble (sic) in spelling and reading and I wonder if you could help me. I am 14 years old and I will be getting a job but I would not be able to get a good job because of the forms to pass for an engineer so I wonder if you could get someone to help me.")

. . . remarkably few of the insights made available seem to have percolated through to the classroom to improve the general quality of English teaching.

I rounded off my argument by asserting that English teachers should now be in a position to be much clearer about their objectives and—more importantly—in a position to employ teaching strategies that would give their pupils a reasonable chance of reaching those objectives.

At the end of the talk, two teachers came up to me. They said simply, "We agree with everything you said. What can we do about it?"

This happened in September 1976. It testifies, I think, to the lack of success we have had in using the insights of the last ten years to improve the quality of English teaching. It is, also, a measure of our failure to incorporate these insights into teacher training courses, both initial and in-service. This represents failure

* English for S.E.D.—Ed.

on at least two levels—the institutional and the conceptual. At the institutional level, Colleges and University Schools of Education have had little success in establishing courses which would give *all* students training to be teachers some introduction to the nature and function of language, and, in particular, some acquaintance with the part that language plays in learning. We are still a long way from the breakthrough that M. A. K. Halliday called for in the Postscript to *Language and Social Man*, when he said:

> "There is another breakthrough still to come, in the training of teachers, who have so far been left to fend almost entirely for themselves as far as language is concerned. Perhaps we may look forward to a time when language study has some place in the professional training of all teachers, and the central place in the relevant specialist courses, especially those relating to English and to literacy ('teaching of reading')."[1]

The reasons for this failure lie deep in the nature of colleges as institutions, and in the nature of British education as, essentially, a process for producing people with specialisms but little else. It is not part of my purpose to explore this aspect of the matter further in this article.

What I am concerned with, and about, is our failure to incorporate into Language Study courses, where they have been included in initial training, and into in-service courses, run by whatever agency, the significant messages of the last ten years.

I am not, of course, suggesting that all those who have made contributions to our knowledge during this period have been saying the same things. That would be patently absurd. What I would claim, however, is that most of what has been written has focused, at one level or another, on the question that is surely at the heart of all teaching: how can we best help the pupil to extend his ability to use his language?

We now have greater insight into the process of language and its acquisition, so that we have a greater realisation of what the individual's language means to him, and of how much understanding of his own language (and how it works for him) the individual possesses. We should, therefore, be much better equipped to set up learning situations which will enable pupils to increase their command of language.

It ought, by now, to be clear that the most productive way of bringing this about is to ensure that pupils are made to engage themselves, and their language, in tasks which they can make sense of and whose accomplishment will entail increased control of language.

It we are being very slow to incorporate the implications of this argument into teaching methods in schools, we are being even slower to incorporate them into teaching methods in colleges and universities and into in-service techniques. Too many courses still consist of a basic pattern of lecture followed (although not always) by discussion in groups. The result is, usually, that the participants are put into touch with knowledge without being given any incentive, or help, to allow that knowledge to feed through into classroom practice. Thus it is that we find probationers behaving in the classroom as they remember their own teachers behaving, their college experience having apparently washed over them without leaving a trace behind. Thus it is, too, that members of in-service courses disperse amid a glow of common enthusiasm, but go back into their classrooms the next day, or the next week, rarely attempting to modify their teaching in the light of what they might have learnt.

But should we be surprised at this? We argue, on the one hand, that only through involvement with language will pupils be enabled to extend their language, and yet, on the other, continue to run courses for students and teachers as if we had never heard of the argument. We lecture at them, we sit round in discussion groups exchanging prejudices. Rarely do we put them into practical situations (and this includes Teaching Practice) which will force them to face the implications of what we are saying, and, as a result, modify what they do in the classroom.

It is interesting to see how some of the earlier published criticism of *Language in Use*, often by people working in colleges and universities, likewise failed to think through the implications of what was being said, especially as it concerns the role of the teacher in promoting active engagement with language in the classroom. John Toman[1] deals at length, in the second of his articles on *Language in Use*, with Inglis's piece "How to Do Things with Words: a critique of language studies,"[7] which I understand is regarded in some quarters as the definitive criticism of *Language in Use*. It might be as well to clear up here one misconception to which John Toman gives currency when he talks of Inglis supplying "the counterblast to it

(*Language in Use*) when it was launched at the 1971 N.A.T.E. Conference." *Language in Use* was published in the Autumn of 1971. It was not "launched" at the N.A.T.E. Conference. Some of us were there to talk about the design of the material, and some proof sheets were available for inspection at the publisher's stand. Inglis based his attack, as Toman points out, partly on some earlier work by Peter Doughty, but also on his, apparently superficial, acquaintance with the trial version of the material. This trial version was extensively re-written for publication, although the concept of the "unit," suggested lesson-sequences, remained at the heart of *Language in Use*. Of this trial version Inglis says, "*Language in Use*, like any tightly structured and marketed programme, must be adjustable to the L.C.M. of its users." The intention of this sentence is, clearly, to suggest that *Language in Use* is some kind of programmed learning. Such a suggestion represents a complete failure to understand the nature of *Language in Use*. Toman confirms this, when he says at the beginning of Part 2, that Inglis "chose to concentrate on the kind of English teaching it represented with no concern for classroom details." The units of *Language in Use* are about classroom details. They put into the teacher's hands suggested ways of involving pupils in language activity in the classroom.

Failure to understand this seems to me to represent a failure to understand not only *Language in Use*, but also the nature of teaching itself.

Another criticism of *Language in Use* appears in Douglas Holly's *Beyond Curriculum*.[3] On page 84 he complains of "a tone of acceptance throughout those units which involve practice in using language in social situations," and singles out for mention unit K3: Negotiating. He attacks it for giving way to "the pressure to work with conventional ideologies. If the project's output is to be marketable it can't afford to offend too many potential customers. Hence, presumably, a really comprehensive field of language use which might not unreasonably, in 1971, have included a section on "arguing a case before a tribunal" or even "organising your workmates to oppose an unfair dismissal" was ruled out because of the project's perception of the situation in schools.

The last judgment rests upon a series of failures on the part of the author, areas among which are to be numbered the failure to understand the concept of the *Language in Use* unit and, beyond that, a failure to understand what we are saying should be the role of the teacher in English teaching. It is made abundantly clear that the unit is a sequence of suggestions for the teacher, suggestions which the individual teacher may take up, or amend, or add to, to meet the needs of a particular class. As we say in the headnote to Unit G6: Catch phrases, there are difficulties in the way of making at the time of writing (1970) suggestions which are likely to remain topical. We therefore aimed to give examples which would prompt the teacher to choose his own, topical or relevant, as he saw fit.

The suggestion that we ruled out anything for political, or commercial, reasons, as Mr Holly implies, is quite untrue. Certainly we had a "perception of the situation in schools." That perception was of English teachers who were not, in the main, equipped by their training to handle concepts derived from a linguistically respectable view of language. The pressure we felt was that of writing, and presenting, our material in such a way as to be accessible to the generality (not the L.C.M., in Inglis' scornful phrase) of English teachers. It is worth repeating that we did this, in the words of the Introduction, "by writing the units for the teacher and confining the text to the outline of a sequence of work, rather than its detailed specification. The outline is concrete and practical, setting out quite clearly what can be done, so that a teacher has no difficulty in deciding how any particular unit might meet the needs of a class, yet the actual shaping, pacing and detailed content of the lessons is left in his hands. In particular, the teacher himself must decide what kind of comment he will require from pupil or student, and what he requires, whether written or spoken, determines the actual "difficulty" of any particular piece of work."[4]

This envisages for the teacher a role very different from that which Inglis and Holly apparently took as their model. It is, also, very different from the role envisaged for teachers by writers of course-books who structure the work, and address questions directly to the pupil, as if the teacher did not participate in what was going on in the classroom.

The role assigned to the teacher by *Language in Use* is, by contrast, an actively participatory role, which places upon the teacher the responsibility for choosing and directing what he involves his pupils in. Some recent references to *Language in Use* suggest that there is now a clearer understanding of our position.

John Toman ends the second of his articles on *Language in Use*, in this journal, by saying that it represents "a good attempt to provide teachers with a language programme that is varied, comprehensive, based on sound theory. It provides a good balance between what pupils should know about language and activities that are likely to extend command of language." In his article, "Goodbye, Grammar," which appeared in the *TES* English Extra on September 17th, 1976, Colin Peacock argued that the strength of *Language in Use* lay in providing for teachers "a rational and coherent framework which enables them to give insights into the nature of language and the ways in which it is used, thereby fostering cognitive growth." Precisely. But isn't this, also, exactly what we ought to be aiming at in teacher training, initial and in-service? Oughtn't we, therefore, to be transforming our courses in the same direction as we suggest that teaching in the classroom should be moving?

In the chapter which he added to the third edition of *Growth Through English*,[4] John Dixon made an interesting remark. After talking about the discussion of language studies that took place at the Dartmouth Conference (something else that happened in 1966), he went on, "Since Dartmouth, the *Language in Use* materials produced by a Schools Council project team have suggested, far more concretely than the seminar was able to, what such studies could be like. These materials in turn have stimulated far more realistic discussion of 'effectiveness for the reader.' What they still await (and, I would guess, what will eventually transform them) is a reformed tradition of language work in participant roles. For, as often happens in our education system, we have asked for solutions at the more abstract level (pupils generalising and discussing theories) before finding them at the most concrete (pupils having the actual experience in school that calls for language in a participant role)."

Perhaps what has happened in the last ten years is that, in our eagerness to find solutions at the abstract level we have been so busy "generalising and discussing theories" that we have omitted to look, at the same time, for solutions at "the most concrete." And here, I think, we could rewrite John Dixon's parenthesis, by insisting that this involves "students and teachers having the actual experience (on courses) that calls for language in a participant role."

In this way, we might begin to modify the conceptual framework within which they currently operate, so that they might become receptive to what the last ten years have had to say about providing, in the classroom, conditions for language development.

REFERENCES

1. Toman, J. "Language in Use." *Teaching English*, Vol. 9, Nos. 2 and 3.
2. Halliday, M. A. K. *Language and Social Man*. Papers in Linguistics and English Teaching, Series II, Longman, 1974.
3. Holly, D. *Beyond Curriculum*. Paladin, 1974.
4. Doughty, P. S., Pearce, J. J. and Thornton, G. M. *Language in Use*. Edward Arnold, 1971.
5. Peacock, C. "Goodbye, Grammar." *Times Educational Supplement*, 19.9.76.
6. Dixon, J. *Growth Through English*. Third Edition, O.U.P., 1975.
7. Inglis, F. "How to do things with words" in *English in Education*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Summer 1971.

Language Across the Curriculum

An Experimental Post Graduate Course

MARY KARUS and SISTER VALERIO
Department of English, Craiglockhart College of Education, Edinburgh

Our experiment involved a group of 28 post-graduate students from various disciplines. The course was divided into two parts: one in the first term before the graduates had experienced classroom teaching and the next in the second term after a four weeks' spell in schools. We saw the first part of the course, therefore, as an introduction to that recent body of research and theory which prompted the Bullock Committee to include a chapter on "Language Across the Curriculum" and make proposals for post-graduate training.

It is not easy to suggest to most secondary school graduates, each totally absorbed in his particular discipline, that an examination of the nature of language and linguistic functions will help the process of communication in the classroom. Nor would many of our students have approached the Bullock Report on their own initiative, without our firm recommendation and help in interpretation.

A legitimate starting-point for the course was sought and found in the provocative statement of Dr Douglas McIntosh on his retirement from Moray House College of Education, "Pilot experiments have indicated that as many as 15% of our children actually go backwards educationally in the secondary schools."[1] A statement of this kind was bound to lead to much discussion, whereupon, after exploring (albeit very superficially at this point) areas of potential weakness in the secondary school, it was possible to introduce for the students' consideration the following suggestion of Bullock —"A primary school teacher may happen to be unaware of the new conceptions of the role of language, but he would not generally regard them as matters outside his concern. However, they are certainly regarded in this way by secondary schools teachers of most subjects."[2] This damning remark led, not to resentment as one might have expected, but to a curiosity about modern linguistic studies, the satisfaction of which would enable the students to accept—or reject—Bullock's assertions.

Bearing in mind Bullock's seven points for a post-graduate certificate course,[3] we devised for the first term a series of lectures and seminars to cover these areas, though naturally equal emphasis was not given to all of them. Professing our support for Bullock's declaration, "We believe it is now time to introduce a more systematic procedure for the prevention and cure of educational difficulties" we attempted to spell out those difficulties. One area of interest was the place of "pupil talk" and this topic was a feature of both first and second term's work, since the need for it was not fully recognised before school practice but was fully accepted after it. Douglas Barnes's research[4] was closely examined and favourably commented on, while subsequently Sydney Smith's views on the tolerance of local speech as a stepping stone to learning[5] met with sympathetic response from our graduates.

Our lively discussions on the need for pupil talk provided an opportunity to impart information on the current theories of the role of language in human activities, the particular linguistic role of the teacher in the classroom and the need for personalised interaction. An objective examination of the teacher's type of classroom language (as opposed to the non-specialist groupings of the young pupils) was a novel experience for most of the graduates. Here Bellack's categories[6] proved a useful guide, as well as Gage's summary[7] of those linguistic features which might cause difficulty for the young learner. Attention was also drawn to the S.C.R.E.'S Stirlingshire survey which had pinpointed the linguistic element as being the cause of many children's errors in mathematics.[8]

Once an awareness of these points had been established, it was relatively easy to advocate and initiate an examination of specialist language, especially in text books, and offer suggestions as to how simplification might be undertaken in work cards and work sheets. Jessie Reid's summary of difficulties experienced

by young children[9] led to a serious reappraisal of what the business of reading actually entails. Finally, James Inglis's plea for humanising the educative process was respectfully listened to.[10]

The first term's lectures had given the students an acquaintance with modern linguistic theory and an acceptance of "the role language plays in generating knowledge and producing new forms of behaviour."[11] Armed with this information, the students were able to take a critical look at the actual practice in the classroom and experience the difficulties inherent in many of the situations they encountered. They returned for the second part of their course, certainly with renewed interest but also with some anxieties and questions to which answers had to be found.

Now, after one half of the course and one continuous teaching practice, we were to deal with matters practical and, like good teachers, we tried to find out exactly where the students were. We therefore required them to write a short paper on insights gained during their continuous teaching practice and any possible strategies they might have devised for enlisting language as a teaching tool.

The result of this writing seemed to indicate that we were all at *Start* once more. The students mostly wrote in terms of pupils requiring to learn the teacher's language, although one or two showed they were conscious of a teacher's register of that graphic, colourful, warm language that helps the pupils to imbibe with pleasure. Geographers, scientists, mathematicians seemed particularly earnest in the cause of injecting jargon without realising their privileged position as traders in knowledge, unlike teachers of language, who are doomed to deal in words only. The English group seemed more interested in the pastoral aspect of teaching and were prepared in this cause to speak the pupils' language (in fact this idea they appear to have fastened on and one or two are practising it with serious impact on discipline!).

After discussion of these papers, since it seems that students obtain little contact with pupils' written work, we began to examine whatever was available, beginning with the kind of writing one obtains from backward pupils, the kind in which decoding requires considerable skill, to a study of a year's essay writing in history.[12] This latter exercise was illuminating from the point of view of both teacher and pupil. If one saw the process as a dialogue, the results were amusing and yet distressing, for week after week, the teacher's comment referred simply to product ("Correct your spelling!") and never at all to process. It was possible also to study a kind of evolution in the pupil's ability to manipulate concepts which had been for him mysteriously buried in textbook jargon.

This had been a time-consuming occupation and we left it hurriedly to examine on videotape the language of teacher and pupil in face-to-face teaching. This led us to discuss, with our eye on the object, semantic awareness and to a lesser degree, interactional analysis and communication skills in oral teaching generally. Semantic awareness seemed the easiest to acquire and the most useful at the time. Gradually general ideas were beginning to emerge: that each subject has its way of seeing reality, that certain subjects—like art and mathematics—are languages in their own right, that learning is largely concerned with words acquiring meaning.

By this time we were beginning to wonder too if we ought to be doing an old-fashioned course on the principles of teaching (it seemed applicable) or a course in therapy. (Was teaching then just generating therapeutic pupil-talk?) Another continuous teaching practice was looming, and the students were to write another paper.

It was clear by now that whatever course one might give, be it simply creating attitudes or a straight run on the nature of language and how it is acquired, nothing could be implemented without an instrument of implementation (this is but dimly hinted at in Bullock) and without a radical re-organisation of the eggbox type classroom. By this time, though the notion of a language policy had been introduced and accepted, its feasibility in the formidable environment of a modern secondary school was being questioned and the harsh reality of the economic crisis had caught up with us, relegating to the realm of idealism any desire for change.

Probably for these reasons, but perhaps because of the debilitating effects of spring, the students' papers were few in number. In compensation these few contained the germs of inspiration: a realisation of the importance of language in structuring reality, the need for the pupils to manipulate concepts in their own language before they are offered the capping jargon, and the powerful need for pupil-talk in which this essential process for learning could be provided.

With hindsight, we now realise what a

daunting task we had set ourselves but our students had not been unreceptive. On the contrary, many of their comments were very favourable, and their attitude to the arts/science teaching process became more positive, while their understanding of the linguistic processes involved became more marked. We have even been so far encouraged as to hope for and plan a similar course for primary graduates.

Reprinted by permission of the *Times Educational Supplement (Scotland)* and Times Newspapers Ltd.

REFERENCES

1. Reported in *The Scotsman*, 12.12.74.
2. The Bullock Report: *A Language for Life*, p. 189. H.M.S.O., 1975.
3. *op. cit.*, p. 339.
4. Douglas Barnes *et al*: *Language, the Learner and the School*. Penguin, rev. ed., 1971.
5. "Preserve Local Speech:" S. Smyth, *T.E.S.S.*, 2.1.76.
6. *Research into Classroom Procedures*: Westbury & Bellack. New York Teachers' College Press, 1971.
7. *Teaching Methods*: N. L. Gage. *SCRE*, 1974.
8. Quoted in *Newsletter of the Scottish Council for Research in Education*, May 1974.
9. Jessie Reid: *Reading Problems and Practices*. Ward Lock, 1972.
10. James Inglis: "A Demand for Thinking," *T.E.S.S.*, 24.10.75.
11. *A Language for Life*: *op cit.*
12. *Understanding Children Writing*: Carol Burgess *et al.* Penguin, 1973.

C.I.T.E. invited two students (now teaching) to comment on the usefulness of the course as they had experienced it.

Mrs Pat Treherne writes:

This course created awareness of the problems caused, in secondary schools, by the low levels of literacy, and indicated that every teacher, of whatever discipline, bears a responsibility for improving standards.

There was formal study of a number of linguistic skills, with guidance on how to lead a discussion; how to impart information in a variety of ways, and at all levels.

Of particular value was the practice of these separate skills, with small groups of pupils, at short, weekly sessions, in front of a video-camera.

With this small number, it was relatively easy to establish an interesting discussion, to which each person would contribute, in marked contrast to the situation found in most classrooms, where only a few pupilf actively participate in a lesson. Yet, oral practice os language, with the pupils encouraged to express themselves in their own words, seems vitally necessary. At the same time the importance of written work should not be underestimated.

As a Geology graduate, returning to teach Geography having previously taught Science, I was very conscious of the technical "jargon," which can surround a subject. Clearly, a term has no place, or meaning, within a pupil's vocabulary, unless it has first been translated into plain English, and, then, fully understood in his own idiom. Only then does true learning begin; only then can a pupil communicate more successfully with others, and live his life at a deeper level.

S.B.F. writes:

Initial reactions to the course on "Language across the Curriculum" were varied. Scientists and mathematicians, particularly, were inclined to the view that language is the business of the English Department. English graduates were interested, but a little apprehensive that they might be involved in an academic linguistic study which would be satisfying intellectually, but time-consuming and perhaps not entirely relevant to the classroom situation. Modern Languages specialists had a businesslike approach from the start.

As the course progressed, and Continuous Teaching Practice threw up examples of communication difficulties in the class-room, Common-Room discussions reflected an increasing awareness of the importance and relevance of the course, and of the necessity of bridging the gap between "teacher-talk" and the pupils' receptive ability.

Many of us had begun by making the assumption that language in school meant words, spoken by the teacher, or contained in the pages of text-books. Possibilities of bridging the gap from both sides were opened up by acceptance of the importance of general demeanour, posture, facial expression, and tone of voice, as "signals," and most especially, of the importance of "pupil-talk," whether in the form of a dialogue between pupil(s) and teacher, or as general discussion among pupils.

It seemed sensible that the contributions of less literate pupils should be recorded on cassette-tape, as an encouragement to self-expression and the use of appropriate language. We all agreed, however, that pupils' writing is still an essential part of the educational process, whether in the form of notes (applicable to all subject-teaching) or in the area of creative writing. This acts as a check on the pupils' progress, and encourages the development of vocabulary and of the individual's organisational skills, enabling those functions of language identified in the Bullock Report as "classification" (essential for the pupil in finding his place in the world and in recognising relationships) and "personal growth" to be fulfilled.

I found the course interesting, informative, and above all relevant, and I am quite sure that future student-teachers would benefit from similar courses, particularly if rather more discussion-time could be made available.

Teaching English to Mixed Ability Sections Beyond S2

BRIAN BOYD
Principal Teacher of English,
St Cuthbert's High School, Johnstone

Much has been spoken and written recently on mixed-ability English teaching in S1 and S2. Advisers and Colleges of Education have been promoting in-service courses in this field, and much-needed attention is being given to the needs of the slow-learners *within* the English classrooms. Many English Principals have begun, albeit tentatively, to try out group methods, essential in the teaching of a completely mixed ability class, and recent reports, as well as work done by individuals "at the chalk face" have provided teachers with practical material for use in the classroom. Although "remedial" pupils are still often extracted permanently from the year group, or from the English class, a definite move has been made over the country as a whole to attempt to come to terms with the needs of the mixed ability class in S1 and S2.

However, there is a very real feeling when one speaks to English teachers about mixed-ability English teaching in S1 and S2 of a "thus-far-and-no-further" attitude. Group methods might be all very well in the early stages, but when it comes to S3 and beyond, setting must be introduced in the best interests of all. But, the question must be asked—in whose best interest is it to set pupils in English after S2? The "high flyers" who must prepare for examinations, who must be given a "substantial diet"? Or is it in the best interests of the teachers, some of whom (normally the young probationer or the hardened cynic) are given the non-certificate pupils? Or is it in the best interest of the less able who can pursue a ROSLA English course which may or may not be worthwhile depending upon the enthusiasm and resilience of the teacher concerned? Finally, taking all of these issues into consideration, one must ask two fundamental questions:

(a) If mixed-ability teaching is worthwhile, why must it end at S2? and

(b) Why have a certificate/non-certificate dichotomy at all in English, which is after all a humane subject, drawing upon many media?

Mixed ability teaching has been going on in S3 in St Cuthbert's High School in Johnstone for some time now. What follows is an account of what happened in session 1975-76 and some conclusions from the experience.

St Cuthbert's is a Junior High turned comprehensive. The more able of the 75-76 S3 were given the option at the end of S2 of going to the Senior High or staying in St Cuthbert's. Some 18 or so chose to leave, as compared to an average of 50-60 who left in previous years. Thus although slightly creamed off, the remaining 238 pupils were truly mixed ability. They had been used to group methods since first year and had always been taught as mixed ability classes, so the S3 arrangement was not a new one to them. Accommodation problems forced the Library to be used permanently as an English classroom, but a virtue was made of necessity and a Team Teaching approach was taken with S3.

S3 had 10 classes of 24 or so each (smaller than in any other year-group). They came to English in two blocks of five classes, but were condensed for accommodation purposes into four classes in each block. This, of course, freed a teacher, and since the department has three Assistant Heads in it, it rationalised what remains a basically anomalous situation. The extra teacher, an Assistant Head, was released as a tutor, and his pupil-contact time was therefore made more flexible. Since only two classrooms and the library were available when S3 came, the physical arrangement of pupils was as follows:

Classroom 1—1¼ classes 30 pupils × 1 teacher
Classroom 2—1¼ classes 30 pupils × 1 teacher
Library—2½ classes 60 pupils × 2 teachers

To cope with this situation a team approach was taken with all teachers involved in S3 teaching regarding themselves as a team. Both blocks did the same work at the same time, so that teachers could work closely together, devising material, changing material where

necessary and having frequent discussion on approach, response, problems, etc.

All work done with S3 was thematic, and the theme for a term's work (eight weeks until Christmas, longer afterwards) was decided upon by the Department as a whole. Each theme had three Aspects, because there were only three teaching areas, and each aspect could be regarded as a short theme on its own (since many of the less able pupils could not readily distinguish between the concepts "Theme" and "Aspect"). Each teacher took one aspect and was responsible for it throughout the whole term. This allowed him scope for individual invention within the guidelines laid down and made him an "expert" in the Aspect. Since there were three teaching areas, three Aspects and four teachers (excluding the "tutor") one teacher "floated"—*i.e.*, he worked with whichever aspect was being dealt with in the Library area.

The Theme itself was organised on the basis that it had to be worthwhile in its own right; it had to suit the pupils' emotional maturity; it had to be sufficiently loose to admit a wide range of literature (in its broadest sense); and it had to admit an element of choice for the pupils to aid motivation and to cater for all interests and needs. After an introductory period of one or two weeks, if possible giving the pupils a sample of each of the three Aspects, and allowing all pupils to begin with the same work at the same time (a help in assessment), pupils then CHOSE which Aspect they wished to pursue for the next three to four weeks. After the initial aspect had been studied for this time, pupils changed over while the teacher remained with the Aspect, revising it if necessary in the light of his experience with the first group of pupils.

Having said all of this, however, questions still remain. Were the classes always mixed-ability? Were the groups always mixed-ability? What kind of texts were used? How were all pupils stretched to their capacity? How were examination skills taught? How did two teachers work together in the Library? And, finally what results—if measurable—were achieved?

The best way to answer these questions is to describe in detail one of the Themes worked on, outline the others and deal with examination and assessment at the end.

One long Theme worked on was "GROWING UP" and the three Aspects were "In love;" "Friends and Enemies"; and "In the Family." The Theme was introduced to each block in the school theatre by one teacher with the others present and the initial stimulus was an extract from *A Taste of Loving* called "As I See Myself" (Parker & Teskey "Themes to Explore"—"The Adolescent"). The introduction lasted one period (35 minutes) and the classes then went back to their rooms and the discussion points were done in groups. The individual teachers decided whether or not to return to a brief class discussion before moving on to the "Work to Do." (At least one teacher bravely undertook to write a description of himself which he read out to the class, and managed to persuade some of the pupils to have theirs read out, anonymously of course). The results were amazingly frank and self-critical. The complete worksheet then was as shown in the Appendix (Worksheet 1).

The questions were a mixture of literal comprehension, inferential comprehension, evaluative and appreciative comprehension, and language points were brought out in the discussion points. Pupils were encouraged to write down the answers after discussion with the group, and to give as much detail as possible. As well as testing comprehension then, questions were designed to "fuel" pupils' work. This worksheet was completed after the next double period (and at home if necessary) and the whole block moved on to "The Big Decision," a short story in "Storylines." This was read aloud by the teacher, discussed briefly as a class, discussed in detail in the small group situation and pupils moved on to the Work to Do. After this initial period of roughly 1½ weeks pupils chose their Aspect. Surprisingly, perhaps, "In Love" proved most popular with both boys and girls, and in each block "In Love" was housed in the Library. Where possible pupils were given their first choice although, obviously, some had to wait until next time round. So for them, all pupils had read one extract and one short story. Now, in the various aspects, a variety of texts had to be used to suit all abilities. Worksheets were made available on such diverse pieces of literature as "Kathy's Song"—Paul Simon; "Dear Kitty," from the *Diary of Anne Frank*; "The Picnic" by John Logan; "Shall I compare thee to a Summer's Day"—Shakespeare;—all "In Love." The school Librarian compiled a list of books, fiction and non-fiction on each aspect and class library material was related where possible, and a book *review* was set as a homework exercise for the end of each Aspect. Pupils' work was also used as stimulus where

appropriate, and a poem written by a pupil on the Hero Worship Aspect of "In Love" was used as the basis of a worksheet, suitable for all pupils, particularly the middle and low ability pupils. This is shown in the Appendix as Worksheet 2.

But what of longer texts, and how was one to stretch the more able in a way which demanded more class work, without teaching to the detriment of the less able? The keynote here was FLEXIBILITY as it is in all group work. When the first Aspect was complete after four weeks or so, as the groups changed over a high ability group was taken off in each block to deal with "Romeo and Juliet," the other pupils simply moved on to their next choice of Aspect. The basic approach to the play was similar. Pupils worked in groups; group discussion played a large and important part; and pupils' writing was stimulated by the text. However, as well as this, the class could delve more deeply into the text, dramatisation was possible and the diet became even more "substantial"

In addition to "Growing Up," two other themes, each with three aspects, were undertaken in the first three terms:

(a) Crime and Punishment
  (i) To Hang or not to Hang?
  (ii) Heroes and Villains
  (iii) Justice

(b) A Matter of Life and Death
  (i) Crisis
  (ii) Adventure
  (iii) War and Peace.

The Theme for the fourth term was "The Future," with three Aspects once again:

(i) Science-Fiction
(ii) Work (*i.e.*, pupils' immediate future)
(iii) Destruction or Happiness?

As well as having taken off a high ability group for "Romeo and Juliet" in "Growing Up," the high ability group looked at "Merchant of Venice" during "Crime and Punishment," while a small low ability group looked at the drama script "Hijack." In the fourth term, the high ability group examined a novel, *Chalky* by John Wyndham.

What lessons then are there to be learned after such an experiment? Perhaps a tabulation will help outline them more clearly:

1. *All* pupils benefit from a wide range of literature. Worksheets are obviously of differing degrees of difficulty and at times pupils are directed to those which the teacher feels could provide most benefit.
2. Skills necessary for the external examinations can be built into the worksheets, thus obviating the need for long spells of coaching before the "O" Grade.
3. Team organisation ensures a raising of standard of the work prepared by the teachers. (One Theme "Crime and Punishment" was almost totally revamped voluntarily after the first block). Teachers always have an "appropriate number" in the other block, and co-operation in the designing of work is of mutual benefit.
4. Ability classes can be taken off—at both ends—to do work which specifically suits their needs and which may require a greater proportion of time spent on class lessons.
5. Pupil choice aids motivation and the mixed ability classes disperse discipline "problems." Sub-cultures are no longer created and since every child is following a similar course *there are no non-certificate* pupils. This is not to say that all pupils will pass the examination nor will all necessarily benefit from sitting it, but every pupil benefits from the course, and all are given the opportunity to sit the examination. Whether one likes it or not, certificates are given for 30-39% and 49-49% and any pupil who may gain an E or D will be presented for the examination.

However, this approach has not been perfect. There have been certain drawbacks, thrown up by normal classroom situations and by analysis of internal examinations. Specific issues have arisen with respect to the possibility of taking the present S3 into S4, and these cannot be overlooked.

1. A balance must be found between using texts as stimulus and as literature to be looked at critically (with a view to answering "O" reading and "H" literature). We decided to build in more "Review"-type assignments in worksheets.
2. Pupils—particularly the middle and lower abilities—tended not to use the information gained in answering discussion points when answering a review question. This had to

be made clear in worksheets and by the teacher.

3. Timing had to be more disciplined occasionally. Pupils often wrote excellent stories, often five, six, seven and more pages in length. Often a poem would be written and re-written several times in class. When examination time came some pupils lost out. Thus we decided to give occasional "timed" pieces of work.
4. Much of the skills and work should be done from the start of S3 by MENTION in the worksheets, *e.g.*, paragraphing; linguistic terms; library terms; planning of essays; summary; etc.
5. Possibilities of having ability groups occasionally in the mixed ability class were to be explored to look at a difficult short text within a Theme.
6. Pupil's writing had to be scrutinised for irrelevance. Positive merits were still to be of prime importance, but irrelevance was to be pointed out more directly when discovered.

What then are the general conclusions to be drawn and what are the implications for mixed ability S4 teaching? Firstly this method does work. Examination results have shown that the more able still come out on top, while more importantly, perhaps, the volume and quality of their class work conclusively refutes any accusations of lack of "stretching." Of course some pupils slip from time to time and have to be told to work harder, but the most satisfying thing is the atmosphere of work evident in *all* pupils across the whole year group. There is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that the effect of the more able upon the less able is a wholly beneficial one. Of course we as teachers, ever conscious of external examinations, ever mindful of the dire warnings of examiners reports, are often over-sensitive to the needs of the more able. After "blowing up" because of a noisy, slightly disruptive pupil, afraid of her effect on the more able and more industrious children, I was told by one of the latter, "Just ignore her, Sir, we don't take any notice of her." The so-called "high-flyers" are not as fragile as we think.

Examinations, internal and external, are important at this stage. Internal examinations are necessary to give examination practice, as well as to gauge how well these less formal methods prepare pupils for formal "O" and "H" grade-type examinations. However, it serves no useful purpose simply to set examinations in S3 which are replicas of external examinations (and as difficult, irrespective of the fact that the pupils still have a year to go), and which do not reflect the kind of work done during the year in class. A compromise was aimed at, attempting to marry the structures of "O" grade and Higher, with the width of the work done during the year; to cater for the abilities of the more able and to allow the less able to perform adequately; to pin pupils down to relevant writing and to allow scope for the kind of creative writing so abundantly present during the year; and to include skills examined in "O" and "H" grade examinations. Thus the two interpretations of "O" grade were combined to give 35 marks; a tentative piece of Practical Criticism was included, thematically linked, for 10 marks; formal writing, again thematically linked, accounted for 20 marks; a reading question for 10 marks; and finally, since a compulsory poem had been introduced successfully in the S2 examination, but allowing for an element of choice, EITHER a poem or a Report (as in Higher) made up 10 marks. To complete the 100 marks, a homework assignment was given over three weeks where the pupils had to choose their favourite theme of the year, re-write two of their best pieces of work done on the Theme, choose two texts from the Theme and review them, and finally, to sum up what they had learned from the theme. This was a successful exercise, and will undoubtedly reap benefits in the "O" grade Theme question.

English always has been and remains a humane subject. Issues, Themes, feelings contained in Literature are valid for all pupils—no matter what their ability. Literature can be studied critically by those who are capable and can be simply read by those who are not. Tape recorders, record players, etc., have become virtual necessities in English Departments and even the slowest learner, or the most backward pupil can benefit from such an approach to English teaching. We as English teachers owe it to *all* of our pupils to give of our best, and we cannot justify condemning pupils to a non-certificate limbo with the rationalisation of Vocational English. If the "O" and "H" examinations (with all of their all-too-obvious imperfections) are not to condemn us and our pupils to the pedagogical straightjacket of coaching then we must cease to teach nothing but past papers and examinable literature to our

able pupils, and non-certificate English (whatever that may mean) to our less able pupils. Let us build in, with the least possible fuss, "O" and "H" grade skills from S1 onwards, more directly in S3 and obviate the need for our Preliminary Examinations to sound the death knell for so many of our pupils. If we do not have to concentrate merely on skills after the "Prelim" then we can continue with meaningful English teaching.

Flexibility is the keynote and we cannot be flexible if we close our minds to the possibilities of mixed ability teaching in S3 and beyond. There is nothing to be lost and much to be gained from this approach, and let us hope that attempts at this kind of organisation do not have to wait as long as group methods in S1 and S2 have had to.

APPENDIX

WORKSHEET 1

S3 THEME. GROWING UP—WITH PEOPLE AND AWAY FROM PEOPLE.

AS I SEE MYSELF

When I'm looking in my mirror at home like I am now, I don't think I'm so bad. Which ever way you look, and whoever's doing the looking, you couldn't call me ugly. Not HANDSOME, maybe, but not ugly. My face is sort of square and what an author might call open, and it's a good colour. (Thank God I'm not one of those blokes who's plagued to death with boils and spots and blains and whatnot.) The scar over my left eye where I argued with a railing doesn't help, though I wonder sometimes if it doesn't make me look a bit tougher. I don't know. And there is always my hair. No two ways about that, I've got a head of hair any man would be proud of, thick and dark with a natural wave that needs only a touch of the fingers after it's combed, and glossy without a lot of cream. No doubt about my hair. And I have it cut every fortnight and never miss. Or only now and again. I could do with a couple more inches to my height. I've always had a yen for just two more inches. But still I'm not a little runt because I've got a good build—nice deep chest that I'm not scared of showing off in swimming trunks, and square broad shoulders. And then my clothes. Now there's no denying I know how to dress. I don't pay the earth for my suits but I know where they give you the right cut and I always keep my pants pressed and my shoes clean. And if my shirt's just the least bit grubby at the collar, into the wash it goes. Ask the Old Lady. She says it's like washing for an army keeping up to me alone.

So there I am—Victor Arthur Brown, twenty years old, one of the lads, and not very sure of himself under the cocky talk and dirty jokes and wisecracks. Take me or leave me, I'm all I've got.

Discussion Points

1. Who is speaking in the passage and where is he?
2. Would you say he is modest, vain or what? GIVE REASONS FOR YOUR OPINION.
3. What details tell you that this passage was written about 10-15 years ago?
4. In the second paragraph, would you say that Victor Arthur Brown is being honest with himself, or not? GIVE REASONS.
5. From the information in this passage alone (it comes from a novel called "A KIND OF LOVING") do you find Brown a likeable person or not? WHY?
6. (a) Would you say that this passage is written in a FORMAL or INFORMAL REGISTER? Whatever your opinion, give at least 3 examples of what you mean.
   (b) Now, say why the author wrote it the way he did.
7. Answer the following questions on the STYLE of the passage:
   (a) Why is "HANDSOME" in capital letters?
   (b) Why are brackets used? ("Thank God . . . what not").
   (c) Why do some sentences
      (i) begin with "and"?
      (ii) not have a verb?
      as you would expect in FORMAL WRITING.
   (d) Why has Old Lady got capital letters?
8. Finally, have you ever stopped and thought about yourself like Victor Arthur Brown? What are your strong points? and your defects? Are you "sure of yourself"?

Work to Do

1. Write a description of yourself, INFORMALLY with the title "AS I SEE MYSELF." Be as honest with yourself as possible, without giving away secrets!!
2. Growing up is a difficult time. Adults do not appear to be understanding, little things seem to be tremendously important. You grow physically and mentally. You don't have many responsibilities, and have your friends round about you.

   Clothes, pop stars, sport, romance etc., can be very important.

   Write a poem or song called:
   "GROWING UP" or "TEENAGER."

WORKSHEET 2

S3 THEME. IN LOVE. HERO WORSHIP.

JAMES DEAN

James Dean, you're just a legend now,
Nobody remembers you as you were,
You're just pictures in their minds,
A story that they tell
Told differently each time,
Built up out of proportion.

James Dean, you left in body before they were born,
But your name never died,
You live on.

James Dean, it's hard to think you've gone,
There have been so few like you.
But like the rest your light went out
You left us all though warmed by the light.
You put magic in our minds
You were what the kids wanted to be.

James Dean, you never died
You only hid from sight.

HERO WORSHIP is a form of love. You have read the poem written by a 14 year old girl—Now discuss these questions.

Discussion

1. Who was James Dean?
2. Why does the writer like him?
3. How could James Dean "live on?"
4. What does the writer mean by "his light went out?" Is this an effective way of saying what she means?
5. Explain the last two lines.

Writing

1. (a) Write a poem about your hero
   OR
   (b) Prepare an imaginary interview with him/her/them. Make it realistic and give details.
2. Very few people ever get to meet their heroes. Perhaps it's just as well—we might be disappointed!
   Write a story of the day you met a hero of yours.

Remember

1. Paragraphs
2. PLAN your story
3. Decide first of all if you are going to be disappointed or not (length 1½-2 pages).

Extra Work

1. Read "SCHOOLBOY HERO"—7 Themes in Modern Verse (p. 19).
2. Make a BIOGRAPHY of your hero or heroes.
   Do it in BOOKLET FORM but do *not* just copy down facts. MAKE UP DIARIES, LETTERS, POEMS, NEWSPAPER REPORTS ETC. PICTURES MIGHT HELP.
3. Listen to the song "CANDLE IN THE WIND." How does it compare with "JAMES DEAN?"

S3 ENGLISH EXAMINATION

ST CUTHBERT'S HIGH SCHOOL PAPER 1
TIME 1 hour 10 mins.

MORE SPORT LIKE THIS AND I'LL KICK THE TV

Can I put in a plea for the silent minority, and beg for some relief from sport?

On the night of the Cup Final replay last week there was nothing but football for two and three-quarter hours on both main TV channels, which made it compulsory looking-in for viewers, like having to watch a party political broadcast or switch off.

Then to make matters worse, because of injury time, and then a further half-hour because it was a draw, and then more injury time, we lost CALLAN entirely on ITV, and the news (as well as every other programme) on the BBC was postponed.

All this when already three other popular prog-
14 rammes had been sacrificed to television bosses greedy to grab as many viewers as possible and to let the rest go hang.

As if this were not coverage enough the goals
18 were replayed AD INFINITUM and excerpts of the match turned up on BBC 2 news, where the idea of offering us an alternative to the eternal football was to give us THE CATHOLIC DILEMMA with Dutch priests singing LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY.

All right, all right, I'll admit I am one of those who do not like football. The prospect of the World Cup TV in which they will be covering all thirty-two matches is to me a doomy outlook of over seventy
27 hours of consummate boredom.

I know the players are highly skilled, but I object to the blatant thuggery of so many of them, the way they slug each other, kick each other, elbow each other, grab each other by their shirts, foul when they think they can get away with it, or lie writhing and reeling on the ground, and the next minute dash off as lively as ever.

I detest their behaviour when the decision goes against them or they think the referee has been unfair, arguing, sulking, or like Georgie Best, spitting at the referee, knocking the ball out of his hand or throwing mud at him.

And I have even less time for their loutish followers who beat up policemen, rampage through the streets throwing bricks and bottles, rip up railway carriage seats, tear out light bulbs, smash up windows, and generally bully their way through the town the way their heroes bully their way through a game, so that seven hundred policemen had to be on duty at the Cup Final on 11th April and the sight of a bunch of football fans is the signal for the average citizen to duck for cover.

It would not give me a twinge of regret if I never saw or heard another of those interviews with famous
52 footballers whose every other banal remark is
53 punctuated with "y'know" and which prove beyond the faintest flicker of doubt that their brains are wholly in their feet.

Of course the brains in their feet are often brilliant, of course there are real sportsmen among them, and of course millions of people love watching football.

I'd just like to say, in the language of footballers, that I think y'know there are a lot of people y'know who don't go all that much y'know for football and if they get much more of it y'know they will kick the set in.

(Anne Edwards, *Sunday Express*, 3rd May 1970)

Questions	**Marks**
1. Why has Miss Edwards written this letter?	2
2. Who or what is the "SILENT MINORITY"?	2
3. What reason does the writer suggest for the television bosses' decision to show all this football?	2

4. Why do the words CALLAN: THE CATHOLIC DILEMMA: LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY have *Capital Letters*? 1

5. What does the writer think of the prospect of World Cup TV? 1

6. (i) Does the writer dislike football because:
   (a) It is an unskilful game
   OR
   (b) It is on television too often
   OR
   (c) The players are a bad example. 1
   (ii) GIVE A REASON FOR YOUR ANSWER. 1

7. What is the writer's opinion of the behaviour of George Best? 1

8. What one word would you use to describe the behaviour of the football followers described in the letter? 1

9. The three paragraphs from "I know the players . . ." all have LISTS of items. Why does the writer choose to write in this way? 1

10. What does the writer mean by saying that the players' brains are "wholly in their feet"? 2

11. What is unusual about the way the last paragraph is written, and why is it written in this way? 2

12. Explain the meanings of these words as the writer uses them in the passage:
   SACRIFICED—Line 14
   AD INFINITUM—Line 18
   CONSUMMATE—Line 27
   BANAL—Line 52
   PUNCTUATED—Line 53 5

13. Do you think the letter is a fair one, or is it too one-sided?
   QUOTE TWO THINGS TO BACK UP YOUR ANSWER. 3

14. Write a summary of the passage in about 120 OF YOUR OWN WORDS.
   Your summary should be one paragraph and should contain all of the important ideas of the original passage, for example:
   (a) The amount of sport on TV
   (b) The unacceptable behaviour of players and fans
   (c) The view of the "SILENT MINORITY." 10

35

POEM (a)—

GOOD HUSBANDS MAKE UNHAPPY WIVES

Good husbands make unhappy wives
so do bad husbands, just as often;
but the unhappiness of a wife with a good husband
is much more devastating
than the unhappiness of a wife with a bad husband.

POEM (b)

TO WOMEN, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED

The feelings I don't have I don't have.
The feelings I don't have, I won't say I have.
The feelings you say you have, you don't have.
The feelings you would like us both to have, we neither of us have.
The feelings people ought to have, they never have.
If people say they've got feelings, you may be pretty sure they haven't got them.
So if you want either of us to feel anything at all you'd better abandon all idea of feelings altogether.

Questions	Marks
POEM (a)	
1. How can "Good husbands make unhappy wives?"	1
2. Do you agree with the poem? Why or Why not?	2
POEM (b)	
3. What is the poet's attitude to women according to the title?	1
4. Would you say that the poet has an OPTIMISTIC or PESSIMISTIC view of life and women? Why?	2
5. Why does the poet repeat the word "feelings" so often?	1
6. (a) Do you think these two poems were written by the same poet, or by different poets? GIVE TWO REASONS.	2
(b) Which of the two poems did you prefer? WHY?	1
	10

S3 ENGLISH EXAMINATION

ST CUTHBERT'S HIGH SCHOOL PAPER 2

THERE ARE THREE SECTIONS IN THIS PAPER.
PLEASE CHOOSE ONE QUESTION FROM PART "A," PART "B" AND PART "C."

A. Essay **Marks**

1. Many men and women have different views on different things, for example:
   Sport; Work; Women's Lib.; Driving; Love and Marriage etc.
   Choose one of these subjects and WRITE A STORY about problems it caused between two people of the opposite sex. 20
   OR
2. Write a letter back to Anne Edwards defending sport on TV, sport in general and football.
   OR
   Write a letter SUPPORTING Anne Edwards plus adding to her argument.
   It should be about the same length as her letter. 20
   OR
3. You have read two poems about a man's view of the problems between men and women. He doesn't seem to look on the bright side.
   Write a story, with a happier ending of a CRISIS OR ADVENTURE concerning a boy and girl. 20
   OR
4. Write a speech for a debate FOR OR AGAINST the motion that:
   "A WOMAN'S PLACE IS IN THE HOME." 20

B. Reading

1. Choose 1 poem which you have read this year in class.
   (a) Say, BRIEFLY, what it was about
   and (b) Why you liked or disliked it.
   QUOTE IF YOU CAN. 10

OR

2. Choose a short story OR novel OR play which you have read this year in class and which you will remember for a long time.
   Say, BRIEFLY, what it was about and say what made it so memorable. 10

C. Poem or Report

1. Write a poem (with RHYME or WITHOUT) on any aspect of any theme you have looked at in class this year.
   (*For example:* CRIME AND PUNISHMENT; FRIENDS AND ENEMIES; IN LOVE; IN THE FAMILY; WAR AND PEACE; ADVENTURE; CRISIS; IN THE FUTURE etc.). 10

OR

2. Use the following facts to write a report for the *Daily Record* (with headlines). Use only information which you think is important and change the order of the facts to suit yourself.
   Day—FRIDAY.
   Time—11.30 p.m.
   Place—JOHNSTONE CASTLE.
   Events—Man: J. Smith aged 32. Woman: J. Smith aged 30.
   Disturbance outside house—loud shouts—crash of glass—neighbours called police—police arrived later—tried to calm situation—failed—arrested couple—jail—possible fine.
   Cause of Quarrel—
   Choice of late night film! STV "In Love Again"—BBC "Let's Talk It Over." Couple had been drinking! 10

Postscript

Mr Boyd will describe in the Summer number of *Teaching English* (Vol. 10, No. 3) some of the modifications his department has made to the course in the light of the dissatisfactions he expresses on pages 25 and 26.

English for the Slower Learner

This article is an edited transcript of the lecture given under the title "The Socio-Economic Background of Slower Learner Pupils," to the National In-Service Course on English for the Slower Learner, in June 1976.

TOM MEENAGH
Adviser in English,
Glasgow Division, Strathclyde Region

What is the connection between the slower learner and his social and economic background? I draw most of my own answers to that question from *Born to Fail*, the National Children's Bureau pamphlet published in 1963, and drawing its statistics from the National Child Development Study which follows the progress of a cohort of children born in the week beginning 3rd September 1958.

Born to Fail sets out three major types of disadvantage:

1. Family composition. The disadvantage here is of two kinds: (a) membership of a family with a large number of children or (b) membership of a one-parent family.

2. Low income, estimated simply on the basis of a family collecting supplementary benefit or receiving free school meals.

3. Poor housing. The family lives in overcrowded conditions and/or inhabits a house with no hot water. (It is noteworthy that the definition of "overcrowding" does NOT include a family of two parents and four children living in a two-bedroomed house).

Children are described by the survey as disadvantaged only if they are subject to ALL THREE difficulties.

Such children make up 6·3% of the population, or one child in sixteen. Unhappily, when regional statistics are taken, the figure for Scotland emerges as one in ten. There are, of course, areas of Scotland which represent the British average of one in sixteen. But there are others, particularly in the urban West, where the figure of one in six would be more realistic.

These children are much more likely to be vulnerable at birth, to have ill-health, to be smaller, to share a bed with a bed-wetting sibling, to be taken into care, to have chronic ill health in the family or to have a father who is unemployed for most of the time.

How do these children fare in reading? Figure 1, drawn from *Born to Fail*, provides an answer. Sixty per cent of the disadvantaged children are of poor ability in reading against 20% of non-disadvantaged children. (But notice that 7·3% of disadvantaged children are good readers).

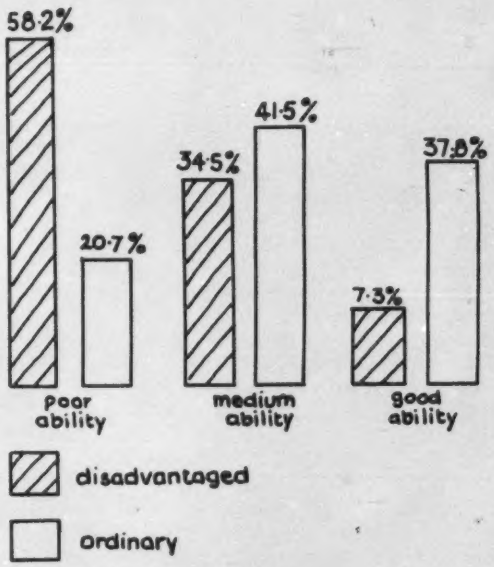


Fig 1.

Let's now look at how this applies to an intake of 300 pupils which is fairly normal in Scottish schools. Suppose you are in an area where the Scottish average figure for disadvantage (one in ten) applies. Thirty of your pupils will be disadvantaged. Sixty per cent of these (18 of them) will be poor readers. If you take 20% of the remaining 270 who are not, technically, disadvantaged but are of poor ability, you get 54 pupils. A total of 72 pupils in your intake will be poor readers, 18 of whom, one pupil in four, are severely disadvantaged socially and economically. In an area where one

child in six is disadvantaged, 50 children in an intake of 300 will be so. Thirty of these (again 60%) are likely to be poor readers. If 20% of the remaining 250 are poor readers (*i.e.* 50 children), it means that three out of every eight children that the school is likely to classify as being in need of special help are severely handicapped in social and economic terms.

One more set of statistics is worth looking at (Fig. 2). This again is taken from the National

	Reading Score			
Social Class	0-12	13-19	20-35	
I and II	12·0%	37·5%	50·5%	100
III (non-manual)	15·7	40·8	43·5	100
III (manual)	32·2	43·7	23·1	100
IV	41·8	40·4	17·8	100
V	52·2	35·6	12·2	100
Total of sample	29·5	40·9	29·6	100

N—11961

Fig. 2 Reading Ability by Social Class

Child Development Study but this time the figures are worked out by R. Davie in his *Eleven Years of Childhood* in 1973. The social class categories are those of the classification of the Registrar General.

To take the extreme case first, it is noticeable that whereas only 12% of children aged 11 in in social classes I and II (by and large the commercial and the professional classes) had a reading score between 0 and 12, 52% of social class V had: while on the other hand 50% of social classes I and II had an advanced reading score of 20-35, only 12% of social class V had. And this interpretation is supported by an examination of social class III where there are striking differences between the attainment of children of non-manual and manual workers, the latter having more than twice the number with a low reading score. The evidence is that the slow learner as measured by his reading ability comes preponderantly from the working and lower working class. This applies equally to measured ability in number and IQ.

But that is only part of the picture, and it is the negative part. In 1942 Schonell found a direct relation between the percentage of poor performers and the grade of the school as classified Good/Average/Poor. The poorer you were in ability and social status, the poorer the school you were likely to attend. The finding of the National Children's Bureau contradicts this, admitting there are poor schools around but saying that these are as likely to be attended by the more advantaged as by the disadvantaged. The disadvantaged tended to be in smaller classes than the advantaged—although we all know the kind of segregation this implies.

According to Wedge and Presser in *Born to Fail*, the disadvantaged even within the statistics weighing against them demonstrate a remarkable resilience and toughness:

(a) They had and made as much use of parks, fields and recreation grounds.

(b) They had less access to swimming baths and public libraries but half of them used the public library at least sometimes.

(c) Their hearing and speech was more likely to be defective in some way (1 in 35 had defective hearing as against 1 in 140 for advantaged children) but while 1 in 6 suffered from defective vision, this was no worse than for advantaged children.

(d) But most interesting of all was a measure of how the disadvantaged coped with their difficulties psychologically: 1 in 2 were well adjusted compared with 3 in 4 of normal children; and 1 in 4 were maladjusted compared with 1 in 11.

These statistics give proportions to what many teachers have felt: how well many disadvantaged children appear to cope with daily disasters that would floor the rest of us.

"Timothy Winters" has become hackneyed. (Although as a wise critic once said, it is not a poem but its readers that become hackneyed). Children still like it, because Timothy is a rebel, he's against teachers and they like to feel sorry for him. They don't, however, get the irony of Timothy's charity.

"And when, at prayers the Master helves
For those less fortunate than ourselves
Timothy Winters says 'Amen'
So come one angel, come on ten
Amen, O Lord. Amen Amen."

Nor to judge by their staffroom gossip do many teachers.

How do our disadvantaged pupils fit into school? As badly as Timothy: "Who shoots down dead the arithmetic birds"? As badly as Billy Caspar? Working class children in middle class schools? Eric Midwinter says: "No wonder that working class children fail to get on according to the law of averages, smarting as they do on the raw edges of a clash of cultures" (*Projections: An Educational Priority Area at Work*, Ward Lock, £1·00).

All the evidence is that they fit in rather badly. "Those rats in 3C" as one of my colleagues used to call them. "My job is to keep order so that my teachers can get on with their job. I'm a peacekeeper," as my former head used to say. He *was* a peacekeeper, in the Western sense the lawman, and I was, quite literally, his deputy. So I know. They fight. They break glass. They throw eggs. They put first year bags down the toilet and defecate on them. They bring Carlsberg Specials to the school party. They get pregnant. They run away and sleep up closes. They kick each other and sometimes, tragically, kill each other. That's on the social level.

At the educational level there are as many grave reservations and, of course, their language is inadequate: it's in a restricted code—it's particularistic instead of universalistic and they don't use the subjunctive.

I have tried to present some factual evidence for the real harshness of the lives of many of our pupils—broken homes, overcrowding, real poverty, and to show that their maladjustment shows in those who can't take it.

I believe that the culture that this "other half" of our pupils comes from has not been sufficiently explored by any of us or looked at in a sufficiently positive light. (I am equating slower learner, backward pupil and disadvantaged pupil).

They have access to a speech code that prizes and embodies directness, brevity, metaphor, humour and expressiveness. We know—we've all suffered from it at some stage. The young teacher is in some command of his elaborate code; the pupil is an artist in his and comes from a culture that prizes that artistry. I once asked a farm-boy why he had a hole in the toe of his boot. The instant answer came from the class illiterate: "He's been kickin coos, sir."

He has a strong sense of self which comes from social allegiances constantly restated and reinforced in speech and behaviour. He generally knows who he is and who his pals are. Participation, comradeship, a vague but comforting "we are the people" solidarity. The newspapers know this and sell it; the schools seem to run, so often, slap-bang up against it.

He has an easiness and assurance of emotional response—loyalty, admiration, love, lust, compassion, contempt, hatred. Violence from others and from us he meets with stoicism and even indifference. Our young hard men are hard. Their open courage in the face of authority would win plaudits in other contexts.

I've mentioned three elements just a bit foreign to (or a bit forgotten by) most of us here: language skill, social solidarity, openness of response. There are also elements of a tangible culture alive (or half alive) which are equally largely disregarded by us. These elements include:

1. Anecdote and description. Jokes of course, real and made up. Everything from abundant relish to horror and revulsion. Crudity from the boys and gossip from the girls. I know this narration is exploited as a substitute for learning by some teachers and I deplore this, but is it ever used positively?

2. Sport in all its aspects popular and exotic. Football, yes. But pigeon racing, dog racing, stock car racing, all-in wrestling, boxing. Sport, and its inevitable accompaniment—

3. Gambling. Cards, "pitch and toss," the bookie's shop. A whole language, a mythology, a literature even. I know because I was brought up on it. Which is probably why like you and every other teacher in authority I'm dead against it. Perhaps we're right. But it's there and it's real. It supports huge industries. In school it's taboo.

4. Music. Well, "folk" is O.K. and pop keeps the girls happy. But what of the music that so many of our pupils make and that teachers never hear about—accordions, brass band instruments, bagpipes and, yes, guitars. Some schools know this and rightly draw on it. Others still "back" Gilbert and Sullivan. Too many others.

5. Creature comforts. Leisure, food, sleep, warmth and cosiness. These are real working class values. They matter. They make life better. They don't go well with homework, duty, ambition or even social conscience. But they too are there.

   I left out booze and so, too, do the schools. (Alright, we do discuss it sometimes in "O" grade and "Tam o' Shanter" gets an occasional airing).

6. Romance and fantasy. The Western novel. James Bond. Kojak. Mainly via "the tele." Our Glasgow working party on the media has recently discovered how sophisticated and articulate children are about their viewing.

7. Hero Worship. Occasionally high hero-worship. Football stars and pop stars we accept. But what about Burns; what about Christ? Burns remains a hero in working class culture. People know his works, recite them, sing them, love them uncritically. They sit for hours at Burns Suppers listening to interminable and boring speeches about him. And while the churches may not be crowded, and while ministers and priests may not be cult figures, there continue to be powerful religious feelings with Christ as a symbol of the good man at their centre. Are Burns Suppers and religious conversions and political Damascus roads purely adult affairs? I do not think so.

There is a unifying hero type behind all this. He is Ulysses: the ragged wanderer, the cunning, resourceful, amoral, hedonistic adventurer who gets home eventually by persistence and resilience. The stereotype is Andy Capp; the current P.R.O. man and bard, Billy Connolly. Burns assembled their eighteenth century equivalents in the "Jolly Beggars" and Arden the current lot in "Live Like Pigs." I'm suggesting that our pupils, especially our so-called slow learning pupils share a culture out of school that is alive and real, that grows and changes creating its own dramas—and its own satisfactions. On a visit to the local, what's the request? Lord Byron's "Dark Loch Nagar?" It's as alive now as in the 30s. So too is "Flower of Scotland" —which I personally regard as nasty a piece of propaganda work as ever was—but it's clever. It speaks. And so is "lapped up."

What, then, should English teachers, all teachers, do about recognising and exploiting the actual culture of the majority of their pupils including the slower learners?

1. Develop and exploit the language potential of our pupils giving this work a very high priority. Accept the idea that the everyday speech of our pupils has all the sophistication of grammar, tone, vocabulary that makes it a powerful cultural medium. We seem to become bogged down immediately in the whole question of accent and dialect—why are we so little concerned to develop the speech of our pupils?

But all this is to speak abstractly. Speech develops casually before it gathers itself for semi-public and public performance. So the atmosphere of the class and the work of the class must be socially directed to a large extent. I really cannot develop this whole theme now other than to say that this involves some of the following: looking at things (often and in detail; and learning to look at things); bringing things to school; going out of school; noting things within and outside of school to be discussed; inviting people to the class; getting things on tape; working towards public occasions—class evening for parents; exhibitions for class gala days etc.

Eric Midwinter in a little booklet, *Social Environment and the Urban School*, WLE, 35p, has charted the details (with a syllabus and concrete exemplars) for a fully developed community school.

Speech should be used. It should, where it is worthy of it, be recorded and appreciated as dialogue/anecdote/playlet based on real life incidents. It should also be practised socially in varying contexts.

One of these contexts I believe should be the time-honoured one of dialectic question and answer. "How do you know that?" "Prove it." "But then what would you do?" There are two things here for the teacher in the normal classroom situation and I believe that they are both very difficult.

(a) talking with the pupils either as a class or as a group. When to come in; when to stay out? How to encourage the faltering but perhaps fundamental point. Again, setting is all-important. Basically the class should be getting on with its programme—theme study, unit study, anthological project, collection for an exhibition —then the occasion will arise and must be used to the full.

(b) getting the pupils to talk amongst themselves with, from time to time, the same level of probing intensity. Establishing the traditions of concession, of learning from others, of tidying one's own ideas against other people's, accepting criticism, offering self-criticism.

Does changing the opening "I wis gonny . . ." "I done something . . ." into your own accepted form really help? Can you combine the two? And does this make it all another school exercise?

Two essays that seem relevant here are Labov, "The Logic of non-standard English," and Blank and Solomons, "How shall the disadvantaged child be taught?", both in *Language and Education*, the O.U. set book (Routledge and Kegan Paul, £1·20).

2. The second thing we should do is construct

a reading curriculum that (a) develops and refines the virtues that our pupils already possess and (b) takes some note of their often difficult personal and social situation.

I have already indicated that we should organise a general curriculum that is socially based and has speech as its main medium. Central to whatever style of lesson management we deploy is the role of literature. I believe most profoundly that the impact of literature on our slowest learning pupils is exactly that experienced by any other group. They, too, need that introduction to imaginatively presented, distanced experience that only literature offers; the chance to feel, to try things out, to see events in perspective.

I see this influence stretching from nursery tales and rhymes, through primary school to every level of secondary school. And with every pupil.

Finding the material and finding ways of presenting it and bringing it into the commonwealth of class and school is not easy. Notes for a bibliography of reading material for the non-academic/disadvantaged/slow learning pupil appear as an appendix to this lecture.

General Arrangements

I have been suggesting here a special role for literature within a broad-based socially orientated curriculum: that literature should be a diet that is appropriate to the needs of our pupils and that helps them to face up to and grow beyond the problems of their immediate existence.

Our pupils admire certain qualities and hunger after them. Let us present these qualities in works of worth and genuine excitement which put them in the broad perspective of human affairs. I have suggested some. As teachers of English you can add to them at your leisure.

I should like to conclude by offering some admonitions to all about how the disadvantaged child can be helped through the organisation of the school.

1. He should (especially in English) be educated with his peers and receive, broadly, the same diet and curriculum in mixed ability groups, or broad bands that are really broad.

2. Far more accent should be placed on individual accomplishment—on developing individual abilities through display of the pupils' work on the wall, in exhibitions and at open evenings for parents.

3. There is a need for co-operation, collaboration and mutual education by English teachers and remedial specialists. Every English teacher should have skills in the teaching of reading.

Seventy per cent of our pupils come from social class III(2) and below—skilled manual, semi-skilled, non-skilled. If we include III(1) "Other non-manual workers"—shopkeepers, clerical workers etc.—it's 80%.

They are too often, especially the bottom 30%, condescended to from Left and Right. They are neither inferior to NOR helpless victims of bourgeois society. I often think that our working class pupils are imprisoned not so much in middle-class schools as working-class schools. Schools that are respectable, cautious and conservative to a degree. The working class has its virtues—but seizing new ideas isn't one of them.

Our pupils do need a new curriculum—and the opportunity to talk about it.

I finish with a quotation from Piaget and Inhelder:

> "It may seem that effective dynamic factors provide the key to all mental development and in the last analysis it is the need to grow, to assert oneself, to look, to be admired that constitutes the motive force of intelligence, as well as behaviour in its totality and increasing complexity."

Effective dynamic factors? Some outwith our control, but there to be understood and drawn on; some directly our concern—appropriate classroom atmosphere and approximate reading reading curriculum. Let the last word come from the poet:

> "And they say there aren't boys like him
> any more."

They still say so. But there are. Lots of them.

APPENDIX

Notes for a bibliography of reading material for the non-academic/disadvantaged/slow learning pupil.

S1

The Dog with a million fleas, S. Widdows. In *Story 1*. Penguin.

The Goalkeeper's revenge, B. Naughton. Heinemann *and* Puffin. esp. Spit Nolan.

The Guardians, J. Christopher. Puffin.

Happenings, books 1 and 2, ed. M. Wollman *et ae*. Harrap.

Lanimer Books of verse, (senior), *comp.* E.I.S. (Lanarkshire). Blackie. esp. "Meg Merrilees," "An old woman of the roads," *and* "Puck's Song."
Touchstones, M. *and* P. Benton. Macmillan.

S2

All summer in a day, R. Bradbury. In *Short stories from America*. Nelson.
The Boy who was afraid, A. Sperry. (New Windmill Series). Heinemann.
Here today, T. Hughes. Hutchinson.
Old Mali and the boy, Sherman. (New Windmill Series and Guided Readers). Heinemann.
Sounder, W. H. Armstrong. Puffin.
Story, ed. D. Jackson *and* D. Pepper. Penguin. esp. "A man called horse," D. M. Johnson. (*In* Story 3).

S3

Billy Budd, H. Melville. (Dramascripts). Macmillan.
The Bonnie pit laddie, F. Grice. Oxford University Press.
Every man will shout, comp. R. Mansfield, *ed.* I. Armstrong. Oxford University Press.
In the winter of his life *and* The Golden eagle, L. Patten. In *Short stories from America*. Nelson.
Penguin book of Scottish short stories, ed. J. F. Hendry, for "Smeddum" and "Silver."
The Red badge of courage, S. Crane. Macmillan.
Shane, J. Schaefer. (New Windmill Series *and* Guided Readers). Heinemann.

S4

My apprenticeship and *My universities*, M. Gorki. Penguin.
The Birth of a man, M. Gorki. In *People and diamonds 3*, D. Holbrook. Cambridge University Press.
My Childhood, M. Gorki. Penguin.
The Mother, M. Gorki. Central Books.
Bunnit Husslin, T. Leonard. Third Eye Centre.
Commonwealth short stories, Ed. Arnold. (o.p.) for "The Tractor," J. Wright *and* "Down at the dump," P. White.
The Country girls, E. O'Brien. Penguin.
Flambards (Series), K. M. Peyton. Oxford University Press.
Love on the dole, W. Greenwood. Penguin.
New Orleans sketches, W. Faulkner. Chatto. for "Africa" and others.
Of mice and men, J. Steinbeck. Penguin.
The Pearl, J. Steinbeck. Pan, *and* (Guided Readers) Heinemann.
Theme on drink:
The Heather ale, R. L. Stevenson.
Tam O' Shanter, R. Burns.
John Barleycorn, R. Burns.
Willie brewed a peck o' maut, R. Burns.
The Inheritors, W. Golding. Faber (extract).
The Ragged trousered philanthropists, R. Tressel. Panther.
Red cavalry, I. Babel. *Collected stories*, Penguin.
Things fall apart, C. Achebe. (New Windmill Series *and* Guided Readers). Heinemann.
Three Glasgow writers, A. Hamilton *et al.* Molendinar Press.
Tortilla flat, J. Steinbeck. Penguin *and* Heinemann.
Tunes on a tin whistle, A. Crang. Pergamon.
Walkabout, J. V. Marshall. Peacock.

Croft

Where is your harvest, Donald,
Among the acre of peat and heather
Your father's father called his own?
Your net tugs emptily,
Fretting against your crumbling stobs,
And your upturned boat grows moss
Among dry sheep droppings.
A low wind worries your broken door,
Keens softly in the chimney-piece,
Shivers in the empty hen-house.
Soon it will rain
Greyness on a grey land.
Have no fear for the windows, Donald.
You shuttered them before you went away.

WILLIAM BARR